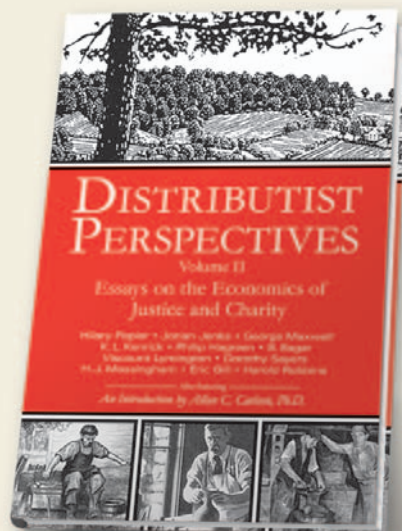


JULY 28, 2008

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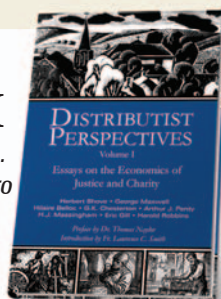
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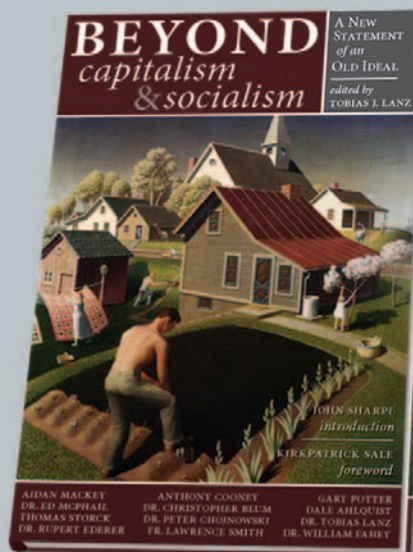
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### Summer Break

In keeping with our production schedule, TAC's next issue will publish in four weeks instead of the usual two. Have a wonderful summer.

[ECONOMY]

## FREE FALLING

Last time President Bush's delusions were permitted to dictate policy, we set out to democratize the Middle East at gunpoint. Now he's turned to fiscal matters and is convinced that we can stimulate, drill, or perhaps just smile our way out of a thicket of downturned arrows. From the White House podium, he scolded the press corps for "yelling 'recession this, recession that'—as if you're economists. I'm an optimist, and I believe there's a lot of positive things for our economy."

His cheer might have been more contagious had the Dow not been shedding points as he spoke. Or if the dollar hadn't just logged a new low. Or if the morning's headlines hadn't reported the highest rate of inflation in 27 years. Or if the price of oil weren't surging toward \$150 a barrel, if anxious depositors weren't lining up outside banks, and if mortgage giants Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae weren't on life support. Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke, demonstrating his gift for understatement, pronounced "significant difficulties."

They won't be fixed by a bailout bill or a rebate check. Mr. Bernanke is boxed: if the government expands its liabilities—shoring up Fannie and Freddie could mean a doubling of the public debt—the value of the dollar will crater and inflation will soar. The alternative is a severe correction and major dislocations, something no politician wants on his watch.

Thus the die is cast. Conservatives prattle on about "mental recession" and the magic of the market—even as Republican officials effect the dirigiste transformation. As Wilson Burman, the *TAC* contributor who authors "The Cunning Realist" blog, recently pointed out, even Social Security privatization, that plum talking point, would have invited unprecedented intrusion: "Let's not kid ourselves: if Social Security



funds were invested in the common stock of Fannie or Bear Stearns or the raft of other financial firms currently in trouble, what effect would that have on Washington's definition of 'too big to fail'? Since the mid-90s, the Federal Reserve has proven itself unable to resist the pressure to take extraordinary measures to boost the stock market. ...Do we really need the financial markets to become an even greater national priority, and for the Fed to expand its role as Keeper of the Flame of National Purpose?" Apparently we do—or so the statist consensus says.

Much as Americans buck at any hint of managed economy, we don't want to manage ourselves. We want to keep buying now and paying later. Risk-free, same as cash, no interest. But while we bet on the next bubble, the bills have been piling up. The currency required to pay them isn't just feeble dollars but freedoms we won't get back.

[RIGHTS]

## UNCLE SAM'S BLACKLIST

Ted Kennedy may be a threat to Americans' liberties, but he is not technically a terrorist. That might come as news to

the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center, which included him—or someone with the same name—on its no-fly watch list.

Senators have ways of getting off of inconvenient lists. The rest of us are not so lucky. Even a former assistant attorney general—James K. Robinson, head of Justice's criminal division under President Clinton—has found that innocence is little defense. Robinson has top-secret security clearance, but every time he flies he's put through additional screening and delays. "I suppose if I were convinced that America is a safer place because I get hassled at the airport, I might put up with it," he says, "But I doubt it."

The American Civil Liberties Union estimates that there are as many as a million names on the watch list. The FBI takes issue with that: TSC spokesman Chad Colton tells the Associated Press that there are only 400,000 individuals on the list—though once aliases are included, the tally is indeed much higher. There can be serious consequences to making the list: Akif Rahman, a harmless computer consultant interviewed by the AP, reported being "held for five hours, shackled to a

chair and kicked by a Customs Service agent after being stopped at a U.S. checkpoint on the Canadian border.”

What can you do if the TSC labels you an enemy of the state? Very little. The center’s website reveals, “The TSC does not accept redress inquiries directly from the public.” What’s more, “TSC cannot confirm or deny whether an individual is on the watchlist.” If you think you’re being singled out, TSC suggests taking it up with the goons enforcing the list, “the relevant screening agency.” We suggest taking it up with your congressman—or even with Senator Kennedy.

[IMMIGRATION]

## LANGUAGE BARRIER

At the annual conference of the National Council of La Raza, Barack Obama called on his 20,000-strong audience to live up to “the ideals reflected in your name—La Raza, the people.”

A noble sentiment, except that *la raza* doesn’t mean “the people”—it means “the race.” Don’t be so literal, *San Francisco Chronicle* blogger Carla Marinucci counseled irate conservatives: “Yes, ‘la raza’ is ‘the race.’ But ... it means: ‘my people, my community,’ as in ‘my peeps,’ or the Italian ‘paisanos.’” La Raza president Janet Murguia added, “We should always be wary of literal translations.” Wise words, though it would be hard to misinterpret the explicitly racial views of her predecessor, Raul Yzaguirre, who said, “U.S. English is to Hispanics as the Ku Klux Klan is to blacks.”

One need not *hablar español* to be suspicious when *raza*-ists say that words don’t matter. And Senator Obama is smart enough to know what La Raza is all about. He certainly knows how to pander, telling his audience: “I think it’s time for a president who won’t walk away from something as important as comprehensive reform just because it

becomes politically unpopular.” Translated into English, that means “amnesty.”

Would Obama suggest that blacks or whites should live up the ideals of their races? Obviously not—and he might be wrong even to suggest that crossing borders illegally is an “ideal” for Hispanics. But it does seem to be an ideal for La Raza.

[CULTURE]

## BASES UNLOADED

The boys of summer are back. Baseball’s appeal eroded because of a labor dispute in the ’90s and a cheating epidemic in the last ten years. Of course, the players, the tickets, and beer are still overpriced. But there is a new life in the game.

Barry Bonds, the bloated embodiment of the steroid era, cannot find a professional team that will employ him. Former drug cheats and perennial all-stars such as Jason Giambi and Jose Guillen did not make the fan-selected teams this year. Instead, the folks in the cheap seats sent 25 first-time all-stars to Yankee Stadium.

The most fascinating player of the season is Josh Hamilton. A former number-one draft pick in 1999, the young slugger lost three years of his career and his \$4-million signing bonus to drug and alcohol addictions. This year, after turning to his personal faith and beating back his demons, he is chasing the records set by the game’s legends. Hamilton brought his 71-year-old high-school coach to pitch to him at the homerun derby and then launched 28 long ones in just the first round. His performance is one of the last and greatest exhibitions witnessed in the House that Ruth Built.

If Bonds symbolized baseball’s shameful recent past, Hamilton should represent its redemption and future. The game just had to clean up before we could admire its dirty uniforms. ■

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[graveyard of empires]

# Losing Afghanistan

Prolonging this good war may be worse than persisting in the bad one in Iraq.

By Leon Hadar

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD observed, “The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.” From that perspective, some of the proud members of Washington’s reality-based community exhibit the characteristics of very intelligent super-achievers when they ridicule President George W. Bush’s grandiose plans for remaking Iraq—while embracing similarly ambitious designs for nation-building in Afghanistan.

But then, as George Orwell wrote in 1984, “the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one’s mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them” amounts to the kind of Doublethink that politicians use to deceive and manipulate their people. Is that what critics of the Freedom Agenda are doing these days when they seem “to use logic against logic” (Orwell’s words) in offering conflicting policy recommendations for two regions in the Broader Middle East?

Realists urge the U.S. to take a cautious approach to achieving ethnic and religious reconciliation in Mesopotamia, pointing to deep-rooted conflicts between Arabs and Kurds, Shi’ites and Sunnis. But these same Realpolitik types become born-again idealists as they insist that American leaders, together with the entire “international community,” should help resolve the ancient differences between Pashtun and Tajik,

Uzbek and Hazara, and the Aimak and the Turkmen and the Baloch people. You see, the Aimak are not so different from the residents of Chevy Chase, Maryland. They just want to live together in peace with their friendly neighbors the Baloch, and we have the obligation to help them do that.

Well, forget Fitzgerald and Orwell. Since some of my best friends are Iraq skeptics and Afghanistan enthusiasts, I’ll try to be somewhat neutral. Embracing the judgment of a value-free social scientist, I propose that my pals are neither super-smart jugglers nor duplicitous propagandists. Rather, they may be suffering from a mild form of cognitive dissonance.

One assumes that rational political players holding two contradictory ideas will try to reduce the dissonance by rejecting one. They could propose that we actually undertake nation-building in both Iraq and Afghanistan or, like other powers (the British Empire, czarist Russia, the Soviet Union) who tried without success to impose their preferred order on Afghanistan, we admit that we will probably not be able to get these many tribes to sing “Kumbaya” around the campfire in Kandahar.

They won’t be the last aspiring policymakers to deal with the stress of holding conflicting ideas at the same time. Neo-conservatives are finding out that establishing an empire and spreading democ-

racy are mutually contradictory. Since learning that reality the hard way—somewhere on the roads between Baghdad and Beirut and Gaza—they have been trying to minimize their dissonance by denying discomforting evidence like the tendency of free elections in Arab countries to bring anti-Western figures to power.

Meanwhile, the rest of us continue to pay the costs of juggling imperial imposition and democracy promotion. And contrary to the expectations that many opponents of the neocons have invested in the “antiwar” Democratic presidential candidate, these costs will only rise if President Obama decides to play Queen Victoria and Woodrow Wilson simultaneously. He seems inclined to do just that.

“As president, I would deploy at least two additional brigades to Afghanistan to re-enforce our counter-terrorism operations and support NATO’s efforts against the Taliban,” candidate Obama promised during a foreign-policy address at the Wilson Center in Washington. “As we step up our commitment, our European friends must do the same, and without the burdensome restrictions that have hampered NATO’s efforts,” he explained to members of the foreign-policy establishment, who want to see U.S. troops relocated from Iraq to Afghanistan to do nation-building there—and to do it right this time.

John McCain argues that Iraq is more important to long-term American security, but believes that the U.S. should now undertake a surge in the Hindu Kush to match the one in Mesopotamia. Obama contends that Iraq is a costly diversion from Afghanistan, which he believes is more crucial to winning the war on terror. "We must also put more of an Afghan face on security by improving the training and equipping of the Afghan army and police, and including Afghan soldiers in U.S. and NATO operations," he said in his Washington address, insisting, "the solution in Afghanistan is not just military—it is political and economic." As president, he would increase our non-military aid by \$1 billion to fund local projects. Sounding like an enthusiastic nation-builder, Obama stressed that "we must seek better performance from the Afghan government, and support that performance through tough anti-corruption safeguards on aid, and increased international support to develop the rule of law across the country."

One could dismiss much of this mumbo-jumbo rhetoric about ambitious plans to rebuild, remake, restructure, reconstruct, and reform the "failed state" of Afghanistan and its mishmash of ethnic, religious, and tribal groups, its underdeveloped economy, nonexistent military, and "civil society"—whatever that is. But notwithstanding (or perhaps because of) the mess in Iraq, Washington continues to be mesmerized by the notion—popularized by chroniclers such as our own Rudyard Kipling for poor people, the travel reporter turned military strategist Robert Kaplan—that Afghanistan could become our last New Frontier. A great cinematic romantic adventure. Another good war to eclipse the Iraqi bad war.

There in the snowy mountains and green valleys of the Hindu Kush, the exploits of Special Ops hunks and for-

eign-aid babes—joined by Blackwater professionals and DynCorp contractors delivering "customer-driven solutions"—could make any of us, including our War President, feel a certain "Afghanistan Envy," as *Slate's* Fred Kaplan put it. "I must say, I'm a little envious," Bush admitted, speaking by video conference from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue to U.S. personnel in Afghanistan. "If I were slightly younger and not employed here, I think it would be a fantastic experience to be on the front lines of helping this young democracy succeed," said the ex-National Guard bombardier who passed an opportunity to take part in that great American drama in Southeast Asia. "It must be exciting for you," he continued, "in some ways romantic, in some ways, you know, confronting danger. You're really making history, and thanks." Kaplan noted, "I suspect very few of these men and women see themselves as indulging in enviable adventures from *The Green Berets* or *Gunga Din*."

That Bush, Obama, McCain, and the rest of the Washington elite regard Afghanistan as a good war has to do with the shared narrative about the U.S. campaign there. Indeed, some of the most vociferous antiwar voices in this country, including contributors to *The American Conservative* on the Right and *The Nation* on the Left, supported the launching of that war on Oct. 7, 2001 in response to the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The war's stated purpose was to capture Osama bin Laden, destroy al-Qaeda, and remove the Taliban regime that had provided support and safe haven to the terrorists. But while President Bush vowed that bin Laden would be captured "dead or alive" and made the destruction of al-Qaeda and the Taliban a top priority, he is expected to leave office with most of their leadership, probably including bin Laden, alive and well after they relocated from Afghanistan to Pakistan's tribal areas.

There is no doubt that bringing to justice those responsible for the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon—or better still, Coalition forces killing bin Laden and his conspirators, Che Guevara-style, on the battlefield—would have provided appropriate closure to the horrific events of 9/11. Like other Afghanistan-centric voices, Obama argues that instead of shifting American intelligence, military, and financial resources to invade Iraq, President Bush should have continued to fight the war in Afghanistan to victory.

But how does Obama define "victory"? Pursuing al-Qaeda and the Taliban into Pakistan and completing the nation-building project in "liberated" Afghanistan.

The part where Afghanistan enthusiasts fantasizing about V-Day get their narrative wrong begins after the devastating American and British aerial bombing campaign. (Remember the Daisy Cutters?) According to the fairy tale concocted by Washington and popularized by the media, we encouraged a bunch of pro-American Afghan good guys to liberate their country from Islamofascist bad guys and create the conditions for building a democratic and unified nation-state. In this version, the Northern Alliance and their leader, the late Ahmed Shah Massoud, played the role of the Free French Forces during the other Good War. (The Iraqi National Congress and Ahmed Chalabi were assigned this part in the bad war.) The role of Vichy is played by the Taliban, and the Nazi occupiers are represented by al-Qaeda.

What's wrong with this story, and why does it matter? First, we need to remember that the outside military and financial backers of the Taliban and by extension of al-Qaeda—the only governments to recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government in Kabul—were our staunch allies Pakistan, Saudi Arabia,

and the United Arab Emirates. The Pakistanis needed an Afghanistan controlled by the Taliban's Pashtun fundamentalists to counterbalance the power of India, their regional rival. (The Pashtuns are the main ethnic group in Afghanistan and on the other side of the border in Pakistan.) For the Saudis, the Talibs helped spread their anti-Western Muslim doctrine of Wahhabism. Before 9/11, the Northern Alliance was a military-political umbrella organization uniting various Afghan groups otherwise fighting each other to resist the Taliban. It remains dominated by the Tajik, the Shi'ite Hazara, and the Uzbeks and is backed by Russia, Iran, Turkey, and India.

To make a long story short, the horrors of 9/11 were perpetrated by the religious, political, and military partners of our Pakistani and Saudi allies. And the defeat of the Taliban was achieved through the help of anti-Western warlords allied with four regional players—an adversary (Iran), a not-so-great-friend (Russia), a friend (Turkey), and a rival of Pakistan (India). We formed an ad hoc partnership with the Northern Alliance, providing them money and arms while at the same time pressuring the Pakistanis and the Saudis to end their support for groups responsible for the deaths of 3,000 innocent Americans. This was an example of a sensible Realpolitik policy—co-operating with a mixed bag of local and regional players to capture our enemies and destroy their military infrastructure. An ideological crusade to bring democracy to Afghanistan wasn't part of the plan.

Pursuing the same kind of realistic approach, we could have encouraged the remnants of the Northern Alliance to work with their regional backers to co-opt Pakistan and members of Afghanistan's Pashtun majority into an imperfect political settlement. This, in turn,

would probably have led to the creation of a loose confederation of ethnic groups, locally controlled and secured by backing from Russia, India, Turkey, Iran—and Pakistan and the United States.

Instead, we insisted on imposing our man, the Pashtun Hamid Karzai, as head of a central government, while hoping against hope that Pakistan would back this arrangement. In the process, we antagonized the Indians, the Iranians, and the Russians, and most importantly, the various gangsters that had helped us "liberate" the country.

To support the fragile balance of power and pursue an ambitious nation-building scheme, we now have two military operations that seek to stabilize Afghanistan. Operation Enduring Freedom is a combat operation led by the United States against al-Qaeda remnants, primarily in the eastern and southern parts of the country along the Pakistan border. The mission consists of 20,000 troops, including about 18,000 U.S. forces. The second operation is the International Security Assistance Force, established in 2002 by the international community and controlled by NATO. ISAF has about 47,000 troops from 40 countries, including 17,000 American troops. The main problem has been the reluctance of our NATO allies to deploy more troops to take part in combat operations due to strong public opposition at home to fighting what has become an Afghan civil war.

Indeed, the good war in Afghanistan is not so good anymore. "In a remarkable shift, Afghanistan, where U.S. officials were once confident of victory, is now rivaling Iraq as the biggest cause of concern for American policymakers," according to a recent front-page story in the *Wall Street Journal*. In fact, a Pentagon assessment issued in June on conditions in Afghanistan since the invasion acknowledged that Taliban guerrillas have regrouped since their fall from

power and "coalesced into a resilient insurgency," making Afghanistan now more dangerous for American forces than Iraq. The Pentagon review states that the fledgling national government in Kabul remains incapable of extending its reach beyond the capital or taking effective counter-narcotics measures.

The insurgency that had once been limited to small portions of the country is now spreading to its more stable eastern parts. It carried out a record 2,615 roadside-bomb attacks in 2007, up from 1,931 in 2006. The roadside bombings, along with a wave of suicide and other attacks, killed more than 6,500 people in 2007, another post-invasion record. "The Taliban is likely to maintain or even increase the scope and pace of its terrorist attacks and bombings in 2008," the report stressed. It concluded that "the greatest challenge to long-term security within Afghanistan is the insurgent sanctuary" within the tribal areas of Pakistan—our formal ally in the war on terror and a recipient of billions in U.S. military and economic aid. The document adds that the ceasefire accords between Pakistan and the militants resulted in "substantially" more cross-border attacks.

That so many American realists are clamoring for "victory" in Afghanistan while giving up on Iraq would probably surprise the proverbial man from Mars. Imagine him as Martian von Clausewitz landing in Washington this year. Based on hard-core geostrategic calculations, he would probably argue that the U.S. has more reason to remain engaged in Mesopotamia—including the need to maintain access to the energy resources in the Persian Gulf and to protect key allies in the region from the alleged threat of Iran—than to be drawn into Afghanistan's civil war in the name of nation-building.

"It is a rule in the life of modern nations that nationalism trumps all



else,” columnist William Pfaff recently wrote. “If the government in Saigon or a government in Baghdad or Kabul, cannot, even with appropriate foreign material assistance, establish and maintain order within its own frontiers and by its own means, armed legions of foreign democracy-teachers, state-builders and winners of hearts and minds cannot do it for them.” And as Pfaff suggested, if the Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks do not wish to be ruled by Pashtun religious reactionaries, they should not need thousands of NATO and U.S. troops to defend them. “If they will not defend themselves, there is nothing the foreigners can do to save them from their countrymen,” he concluded.

Iraq and Afghanistan skeptics recognize that both countries are involved in civil wars, with tribal forces fighting over territory and resources in order to preserve their power and identity. Their political, economic, and religious interests don’t necessarily correspond to or conflict with American interests. After all, in Afghanistan, Pakistan backed al-Qaeda and Iran supported the Northern Alliance. In Iraq, the U.S. has partnered with a Shi’ite movement with ties to Iran.

During the 20th century, the U.S. and its allies had an interest in preventing aggressive global powers from dominating these regions. Such a threat doesn’t exist today—unless one considers the mythical Caliphate, the brainchild of the al-Qaeda-neocon coalition. The notion that America will succeed in nation-building through military force in either Iraq or Afghanistan is pure fantasy.

One hopes that Obama and company will resolve their cognitive dissonance by modifying their belief about the moral benefit and policy utility of nation-building. Indeed, the new administration should abandon these fantasies and instead embrace a realist policy of

*Continued on page 27*

**British and American intelligence have concluded that rogue elements in Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence were behind the June 7 attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul that killed 41 people and injured 140.**

If that assessment is correct, it would confirm that at least some Pakistani officials are willing to use terrorist groups to wage a proxy war against India, something that New Delhi has been claiming for years. Afghanistan’s government has repeatedly accused ISI of protecting and supporting the Taliban, culminating in Afghan President Hamid Karzai’s recent threat to send his forces into Pakistani territory to root out the insurgents. Pakistani President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has said repeatedly that his country has no wish to destabilize Afghanistan, but he is clearly not in complete control of his own intelligence service. The role of the ISI in supporting the Taliban insurgency is a highly sensitive issue for both London and Washington because there are a number of trade-offs involved. The British and U.S. governments have both avoided directly accusing Pakistan of aiding insurgent groups. Britain depends on the ISI for critical information on terror plots in the UK, nearly all of which have been at least partly planned in Pakistan. The U.S. is completely dependent on ISI support in its campaign against Osama bin Laden, recognizing that Pakistani security services have killed or captured more al-Qaeda activists than the rest of the world combined. But off the record it is generally acknowledged that some ISI elements are actually working closely with the Taliban and al-Qaeda. British intelligence sources revealed that last summer a Taliban corpse found on a battlefield in Helmand was carrying papers that identified him as a serving ISI colonel. When the British Foreign Office queried Islamabad about the man’s status, the Pakistani army reported that the officer was “on leave” at the time of his death. A U.S. Department of Defense-funded study carried out by the RAND Corporation and published last month stated that at least some officers in the ISI are aiding the Taliban.



**Rupert Murdoch’s newspapers have frequently been used to air sensational stories that appear to have been produced by Israeli intelligence.**

The latest is a July 6 article in *The Sunday Times* of London entitled “‘Germ warfare’ fear over African monkeys taken to Iran.” According to the story, a Tanzanian dealer claims he sold 215 wild monkeys to the Razi Vaccine and Serum Institute in Tehran and that the Iranians were secretive and seemed to want the monkeys very much. The article then speculates that “the monkeys may be used for research involving biological weapons,” adding that U.S. intelligence believes “the pharmaceutical industry in Iran has long been used as a cover for developing germ warfare capability.” Having made its point, the report then describes how a number of animal welfare groups are looking into the allegations, neatly linking Iran to germ warfare to the brutal treatment of animals without any evidence to connect the various elements of the story.

*Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a fellow at the American Conservative Defense Alliance.*

# The Right Democrat

South Carolina Senate candidate Bob Conley is more conservative than his GOP foe.

By Jack Hunter

ON JUNE 11, “The Morning Buzz” radio show on WTMA 1250 AM in Charleston, South Carolina was bombarded with phone calls from listeners railing against Sen. Lindsey Graham, who the day before had secured the GOP nomination. Not a single pro-Graham call came in during the four-hour program. “I’m a Republican ... but I’m voting Democrat this November,” one caller vowed. “Grahamnesty has got to go!”

Despite this post-primary radio outrage, observers see few hurdles on the horizon for the incumbent senator. But “Grahamnesty”—so called because of his support of the 2007 Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act—finds himself confronting a challenge from an unexpected quarter this November.

A June 12 headline in Charleston’s *Post & Courier* read, “Dems seem to back conservative” in reference to Democratic primary winner Bob Conley, who barely secured his party’s nomination. (The final tally after a recount revealed that Conley won by only 986 votes out of the 144,460 cast.) “We’ve nominated a Republican in a Democratic primary,” said Conley’s challenger, Michael Cone. And indeed, the story revealed that Conley held a number of conservative positions, had only recently left the Republican Party, and even voted for Ron Paul in South Carolina’s presidential primary. But while Cone fumed, former Democratic National Chairman Don Fowler accepted Conley. “That’s the Democratic Party. We welcome anybody,” he said.

Fowler’s open-armed invitation could be comforting, as “Flattop Bob,” as Conley is often called, is as conservative as his Johnny Unitas-style haircut suggests. In private conversation, he uses the terms “populist,” “traditionalist,” and even “paleoconservative” favorably and frequently, and refers to Washington, D.C. as the “District of Criminals.” Over a pile of BBQ and collard greens (his choice), Bob explained his wardrobe woes: “First my advisers took my suit, then my long sleeves. It just doesn’t feel right for me to wear a short-sleeve dress shirt, Jack.” For the Catholic Conley, wearing his Sunday best is the norm: he tries to attend Mass every day. “The worst part is sometimes we have to be mean to him and tell him he simply doesn’t have time to go,” explains campaign manager Dan Castell, noting how impractical Conley’s church schedule is in the midst of a Senate run.

The Democratic establishment long ago wrote off this contest. Lindsey Graham is a well-funded incumbent in a deep red state. A weak field allowed the virtually unknown Conley, an engineer and commercial pilot, to take the nomination. Now Graham, much to his surprise, must compete with a Democrat who stands well to his right.

On immigration, the issue that so animated the WTMA audience, Conley’s position resembles legislation recently passed in the Republican-dominated South Carolina statehouse, including measures that impose stiff penalties for employers who hire illegal aliens. But he rejects accusations that his stance mir-

rors the Republican position: “If President Bush and John McCain and Lindsey Graham all want to give amnesty, want to import more foreign nationals to take our jobs, I don’t see how I’m holding the position they do.”

When discussing job losses and trade deficits, Conley never mentions “China” without adding “communist” first. Lou Dobbs would smile.

Such populism could put Graham, an avid cheerleader for free trade, at a serious disadvantage in a state where Sen. Fritz Hollings spent nearly four decades championing economic nationalism. John Edwards ran strong in upstate South Carolina—he defeated Obama and Clinton in Oconee County with 45 percent of the vote and had strong second-place showings in half a dozen of the surrounding counties. That Oconee is Edwards’s birthplace was undoubtedly a factor in his success, but so were campaign speeches promising more jobs and fairer trade. Employment is a pressing issue here: last month, Hollings told Myrtle Beach’s *Sun News*, “We’ve lost 94,500 manufacturing jobs, a net loss counting the jobs we got, in the last 7 years, since little boy George [W. Bush] has been in office.” The majority of those losses were suffered in the upstate.

Campaigning in the Democratic primary, Conley performed strongly in the same areas that favored Edwards. His victories were close in each upstate county, but these wins proved decisive. Economic populism resonates with local Republicans as well. Conley says that “from York to Anderson counties, they’ve

still got Duncan Hunter signs up,” referring to the congressman who was arguably the most protectionist candidate in this year’s GOP presidential primary. The alleged benefits of the managed, corporate trade deals touted by Graham are a hard sell in these counties, and the senator’s constant absence from the state gives many voters the perception that he simply doesn’t care about them.

Castell is forthright about the Conley campaign’s themes: “We’re populists, we’re going straight to the people of SC, that’s all we care about. ... We’ll ask, ‘You seen Lindsey? Is he still out running around with McCain? It looks like we’re running for a vacant seat.’”

Conley is at least as socially conservative as Graham, whose pro-life and anti-gay-marriage positions are popular in South Carolina. And many cultural conservatives distrust the sitting senator. Graham’s challenger in the Republican primary, Buddy Witherspoon, defeated him in Greenville, one of the most conservative counties in the state.

Conley doesn’t shrink from comparisons to Patrick Buchanan’s populism—he often makes them himself—though he is more likely to be recognized as a “Ron Paul Democrat.” He shares many of the Texas congressman’s positions, and his support for Paul in the primary has been well publicized. “If you take a look at the folks on Capitol Hill who have really taken leadership positions,” says Conley, “and you also take a look at the entire field of fellows who were running for president, there is no one on Capitol Hill who has been a stronger voice against Iraq policy, even prior to the invasion, than Ron Paul.” Like Paul, Conley keeps a copy of the Constitution on his person. It’s not much use to him, however, as he has most of the text memorized.

Conley fully embraces the antiwar themes of the Paul campaign. He believes the U.S. needs to “redeploy our

troops home as quickly as is practical and consistent with their safety.” He also promises to repeal the PATRIOT Act and views the current war-induced hysteria as a danger to civil liberties.

Graham’s “the surge is working” rhetoric plays well in South Carolina, which has more veterans and active-duty military personnel per capita than any other state. The senator regularly touts his military credentials as a colonel in the Air Force Reserve: election mailers featured him dressed in fatigues, flying over the desert in helicopters, and literally drawing lines in the sands of Iraq. Graham, like McCain and Bush, promotes the narrative that supporting the troops means supporting the wars they fight, a view South Carolina majorities have repeatedly affirmed at the ballot box.

But Graham’s assumptions about a pro-war consensus may no longer be accurate. In neighboring North Carolina, antiwar Republicans Walter Jones and B.J. Lawson defied the conventional wisdom and enjoyed substantial victories in their congressional primary contests. Jones’s district is one of the most military-heavy regions in the country, including three Marine bases, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, and roughly 60,000 veterans. Jones beat his Republican primary challenger, who attempted to paint the congressman as weak on military issues, with nearly 60 percent of the vote.

Whether or not Jones and Lawson represent a significant trend among Republicans, Conley points to a definite pattern in his own party, where Sen. Jim Webb of Virginia, Congressman Heath Shuler of North Carolina, Congressman Tim Mahoney of Florida, Sen. Jon Tester of Montana, Sen. Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, and Congressmen Brad Ellsworth and Joe Donnelly of Indiana have all recently enjoyed victories against incumbent Republicans. Often with less money and name recognition, these self-described Blue Dog Democrats won by

campaigning on relatively conservative, antiwar, and populist themes.

Conley constantly puts his own campaign into a larger political and historical context, whether Blue Dog, Southern Democrat, or Old Right. He rattles off long forgotten politicians, elections, and legislation with ease. “Bob’s the smartest guy I know,” says adviser Brian Frank. “He’s a walking encyclopedia and he’s absolutely obsessed with dead people.” Frank also reports that Conley only listens to classical music.

Granted, Graham enjoys significant advantages over Conley in experience, organization, and fundraising—the senator reportedly has around \$4.5 million on hand. And in a state where voters are accustomed to Thurmonds, Hollingses, and Ravenels holding the reins of government, the immense benefit of a famous surname is not lost on the unknown challenger. While his friends and admirers love to point out that, as Frank puts it, “Bob is just a regular guy who wants to help his country,” Conley’s success will depend on whether enough regular folks, with the means and the desire, rally to his campaign.

His opponent suffers none of these constraints and could afford largely to ignore the primary. At WTMA in Charleston, Graham ran radio ads touting his many trips to Iraq, but was the only candidate among those running for a variety of state offices to decline an interview with our station. He has also avoided facing the public about his support for amnesty after getting booed at the few Republican gatherings he’s attended. Unlike McCain, Graham won’t challenge his opponent to town hall discussions.

He doesn’t think he needs to. In Graham and Jim DeMint’s last senatorial races, both won with roughly 54 percent of the vote compared to 44 percent garnered by their Democratic challengers. But most Republicans this year aren’t enthusiastic about their party or their



presidential candidate, and Senator Graham is one of the most unpopular Republicans in the country after President Bush. Moreover, with black South Carolinians excited about Barack Obama, they could create a scenario in which 30 percent of the state's population supports Conley de facto by voting a straight Democratic ticket. In Georgia, Virginia, and a host of other Southern states, the DNC could try to recruit unregistered black voters; SC has an estimated 200,000.

When asked about Conley's conservatism by a television reporter for WRAL, Graham's response was indicative of the dynamics of the contest: "from what I can tell, he doesn't represent moderation. I represent a brand of conservatism that you will feel comfortable with." Is Graham painting himself as a moderate in an election where his constituents already have serious reservations about his conservative credentials? Not even Graham's supporters are entirely "comfortable" with him these days, something the senator seems to realize since he won't even talk to them.

If lightning strikes twice and the unorthodox candidate few predicted to win the Democratic primary prevails in the general election, Conley will have pulled off one of the greatest electoral upsets in recent memory. This is unquestionably Graham's race to lose. But in a political environment where most voters agree that Graham's record is embarrassing, even if Bob Conley goes down in defeat, an unexpected attack from the right by a Blue Dog Democrat might be enough to make this red-state Republican senator blush. ■

*Jack Hunter, also known as the "Southern Avenger," is a personality for WTMA 1250 AM talk radio and a columnist for the Charleston City Paper in Charleston, South Carolina. Bob Conley's website is [www.bobconleyforsenate.com](http://www.bobconleyforsenate.com).*

## Power Failure

The energy crunch emerges as the 21st century's top national-security issue.

By Andrew A. Michta

ON MAY 2, 2008, Goldman Sachs finally called it: the super-spike endgame in oil has begun. The price per barrel of crude could reach \$200 in the next six to 24 months, with continued extreme volatility. The report confirmed what the U.S. Department of Energy chooses to ignore but others have been saying since at least 2005: we have entered a period of "peak oil," in which demand consistently outstrips global supply, amid growing uncertainty about the price of energy and the availability of reserves.

About a month later, Morgan Stanley warned of a "monumental transfer of wealth to oil exporters, which may last beyond our generation, with important geopolitical and security implications." Receipts of oil exporters are running as high as several billion dollars per day, with \$1 billion going to Saudi Arabia. OPEC's surplus this year is projected to reach \$500 billion, with most of it flooding into sovereign wealth funds—essentially investment arms of foreign governments. At the oil price of \$135 a barrel, Morgan Stanley estimated that the stock of the proven reserves of the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries would be worth about \$65 trillion. By comparison, the world's total public equity market capitalization is around \$50 trillion.

A glance at the exploding skyline of Dubai tells the story better than reams of market-intelligence reports. We are in the midst of the most massive wealth trans-

fer the world has ever witnessed, and it is driven not by market forces but by an increasingly state-controlled global energy-supply monopoly. Unchecked, this economic shift will result in a radical reordering of the global balance of power.

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The most common explanation for the energy crunch is the widening gap between supply and demand, with the culprit—depending on one's ideological predilection—being shady oil companies or skyrocketing consumption in the United States, European Union, China, and India. These explanations are partly true but incomplete.

According to EU projections, between 2002-2030, demand for oil in the U.S. and Canada will grow by 34 percent from 19.7 million barrels to 26.3 million per day. The EU will see its energy needs expand 15 percent, and Japan and Korea will consume an additional 11 percent. China's demand will grow by a whopping 157 percent over the same period—from 4.9 million barrels per day to 12.7 million—displacing the EU as the second largest consumer of oil. India will consume an additional 124 percent.

But there is little direct connection between present demand and the surge in prices. From 2002 to 2007, the price of oil rose \$60 per barrel, then last year it jumped another \$60. Consumption, while rising, had scarcely doubled.

Focusing exclusively on market demand assumes that suppliers play by the rules of the marketplace. But in an environment in which resources are nationalized, price is not set by the market. Energy producers' strategic goals and security objectives are driving the supply side of the equation, even as we continue to consider the crisis in pure market terms.

Of course, some of the price increase can be associated with speculation, with the flood of new institutional investors or the collapsing dollar. But the most direct explanation points to persistent uncertainty and fear that the emerging oil and gas supplier monopolies—on a scale unseen until now—have the ability to dictate price at will. The relentless escalation is driven by the anticipation that demand will continue to rise while the already limited supply will be kept low by the actions of government-controlled oil and gas cartels, moving toward a complete disconnect between prices and available reserves.

Since the creation of OPEC, the pricing of oil has been an exercise in market manipulation. The openly stated goal of the organization is to control the world oil market by "regulating oil production and production standards." Since its inception, OPEC has shown itself to be one of the most prosperous and effective monopoly alliances in history, notwithstanding occasional cases of individual members acting outside the agreed upon production and pricing targets, as in the mid-1990s when overproduction led to the collapse of the oil price. At the time, the first Gulf War and the dramatic increase in the American military footprint in the Middle East made the United States the guarantor of regional security, in the process creating a strong incentive for Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to keep the spigot wide open. The "roaring nineties" of cheap energy and the soaring stock market followed.

In the post-9/11 world, the situation has changed dramatically, in part because of the loss of American credibility due to our inability to destroy al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and in greater part because of the Bush administration's disastrous decision to attack Iraq. The invasion first took the Iraqi oilfields out of play; later, as the country disintegrated into factional fighting, the Iraqis were able to put back on line only a portion of their degraded oil capacity. The unintended consequence was the strengthening of Iran and Saudi Arabia's monopoly position.

The world's largest national oil company, Saudi Aramco, operates more than 9,000 miles of petroleum pipelines throughout Saudi Arabia, including the key 745-mile East-West Crude Oil Pipeline taken over in 1984 from Mobil and used to transport Arabian Light and Super Light from Abqaiq refineries in the Eastern Province to Red Sea terminals for export to European markets. The Saudi-owned delivery chain extends beyond pipelines and terminals, too: Aramco's shipping subsidiary Vela International Marine has one of the largest fleets of supertankers in the world.

The pattern of maximizing state control over supply is repeated across the region. The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) runs all of that country's oil and gas exploration and production. International companies can develop Iranian oil sources only in partnership with an Iranian affiliate. Likewise, state-owned Qatar Petroleum controls each aspect of Qatar's oil sector, including exploration, production, refining, transport, and storage. Kuwait's nationalized oil industry is run by the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, with its subsidiary Kuwait Petroleum International managing refining and marketing and the Kuwaiti Oil Tanker Corporation running shipping. Bahrain Petroleum Company holds similar sway over

everything from exploration to distribution, including awarding exploration contracts to international companies. Since 1979, Bahrain's natural gas production has also been nationalized. So too in the United Arab Emirates, which controls 8.5 percent of the global oil supply: the largest state-owned company is the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, with 17 subsidiary companies in the oil and natural gas sectors. ADNOC has the right to take up to a 60 percent stake in any major oil project. Foreign investors are largely limited to exploration and partnering in building pipeline capacity.

Another key development on the road to the cartelization of the global energy supply was the election of Vladimir Putin as Russia's president. Marking the end of the "times of trouble" in Russia, Putin's unwavering goal has been to restore the country's power and international prestige. His strategy was based on an idea that even Russia's most liberal democrats had advocated for years: renationalization of the energy sector to provide steady government revenue. During the Putin presidency and now under Dmitri Medvedev, Russia reconsolidated state control over its energy sector. Through political pressure, hard bargaining, and the selective use of law enforcement—as in the case of jailing Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the owner of Yukos—Putin and Medvedev have made Russia's energy resources the critical component of the country's national-security strategy.

The plan has worked: in 2007, Russia's GDP grew by 8.1 percent, marking its seventh consecutive year of growth and surpassing all other G-8 members. According to the IMF and World Bank, Russia's oil and gas sales generated 64 percent of all its export revenue. The government fund set up to manage the windfall was projected in 2007 to be worth \$158 billion.

To maximize influence in Europe and the “near abroad,” Medvedev will follow Putin’s renationalization of Russia’s energy with a page from the Arab play-book: the cartelization of natural gas. Russia controls the world’s largest supply of natural gas, with nearly twice the reserves of Iran, the second largest producer. In 2007, Gazprom, a de facto national monopoly, controlled 85 percent of all Russian natural gas exports. This year it will invest over \$20 billion in natural gas production and transportation.

By expanding its control over gas resources in Central Asia through a series of pipeline infrastructure deals, Russia has put itself in a position to negotiate an agreement with Iran to cartelize the global supply of natural gas. Once this happens, the lion’s share of oil and gas in the Middle East and Eurasia will be locked into the OPEC/Russia-Iran duopoly. Russia’s dominant position in Central Asia will also allow Moscow to alleviate pressure on its own energy market and to target liquid natural gas for monopoly control, consolidating its domination of the EU gas market. The resulting revenue—derived from prices set in Moscow and Tehran—may prove much greater in the long run than analysts have been predicting, allowing both Russia and Iran to continue to modernize their militaries.

The security implications are potentially devastating for the United States and the European Union. Russia has natural gas reserves estimated at close to 47.9 trillion cubic feet. Add to that the reserves of Central Asia and Iran—Iran holds 24.8 trillion cubic feet—and this new cartel will be able to control the price of natural gas. Russia and Iran are already cooperating over their energy interests. On July 13, Gazprom signed an agreement with NIOC to help Tehran develop its oil and gas fields. In a meeting with Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Aleksei Miller, CEO of

state-controlled Gazprom, pledged his company’s commitment to “be a cooperative partner for the Islamic Republic of Iran.” The Iranian host reciprocated by calling for “expanding ties with Russia in oil and gas as far as possible.” It is also reported that Gazprom will assist in the building of a pipeline to deliver Iranian gas to India and Pakistan. In short, Washington should have no illusions that Moscow would risk its relations with Tehran to support America’s opposition to an Iranian nuclear program.

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American security policy in the 20th century was based on the premise that U.S. global influence could be protected by preserving an open international economic order and by denying any one great power monopoly control over critical areas of the world where resources were concentrated. The policy proved sound, as Western Europe, aligned with the United States, quickly recovered from its World War II devastation, while Asia—save Japan—languished, and Russia proved unable to compete with the transatlantic alliance. The policy stabilized Europe and Asia, saw an unprecedented expansion of market democracies, and in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse helped to reconstitute and reunify Europe. The core elements of the U.S. security map—American financial and industrial power in the Western hemisphere and the technological resources of Europe in Eurasia and Japan in the Pacific—allowed us to act as an off-shore balancer in a number of secondary geostrategic regions, including the Middle East. While never a hegemon, the United States was able to balance its commitments and provide security to the key regions of the globe.

Today, the American position and the international security environment are quite different. Formerly the creditor to

the world, the United States is now the largest debtor nation, a net importer of capital and energy with a shrinking industrial base. It is engaged in two wars funded through runaway international borrowing. With the accelerated global diffusion of knowledge and technology through internationalized manufacturing, the pivotal points of global stability are to be found in areas that contain the only resource that has not been subject to the competitive pressures of globalization: fuel.

The nationalization and cartelization of the global energy supply is returning us to a security paradigm reminiscent of the 19th century, when physical control of resources took precedence over the market. The Middle East, Russia in conjunction with Central Asia, parts of Africa, and parts of Latin America are today the four pivots of this new geostrategic energy map.

The inability of the United States and Western Europe to resist the trend toward monopoly control of energy resources—in combination with the more recent failure of both the Clinton and Bush administrations to change oil consumption in the United States—has exposed the U.S. to an unprecedented security risk. By not reacting to the creation of OPEC and allowing the use of the “oil weapon” after the Yom Kippur War, Western countries permitted the open energy market to be dismantled.

According to received wisdom, in the new globalized economy, producers and consumers are equally tied to a shared marketplace. But state behavior today strongly suggests that physical control of energy sources trumps all. Today most of the largest reserves, from Saudi Arabia to Mexico to Russia, are run by oil companies that are nationalized or whose majority stock is owned by government. The full spectrum of state power is deployed to ensure maximum control over supply, and economic pow-



erhouses such as China, India, and Russia are adapting to the new geostrategic game. China's neocolonial expansion into Africa is a case in point.

On the U.S. side, there is also a growing realization that control of supply is essential to energy security. The ongoing noncompetitive negotiations between the Iraqi government and Exxon-Mobil, Shell, Total, and BP to develop and maintain that country's oil fields are presented by the media as defying the nationalizing trend, but they are in line with the actions of other states seeking to secure supply.

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The seemingly straightforward answer to the current energy crunch would be to break the stranglehold of the monopoly suppliers by drilling for more oil and natural gas at home. President George W. Bush and Sen. John McCain have recently called for reversing the 27-year ban on offshore drilling. It is estimated that by opening up new drilling on federal land and coasts we could add about 3 million barrels a day to the current U.S. output of some 5.1 million—a significant boost to domestic supply as we develop alternative energy sources.

But we should not delude ourselves that we can drill our way out of the current predicament. Without a commitment from national suppliers in key oil producing states to increase output, as well as major improvements in energy efficiency worldwide, added supply in the U.S. would not significantly lower the price of oil. More importantly for U.S. national security, oil is only one part of the unfolding global energy squeeze and cannot be treated in isolation.

As reported by the McKinsey Institute, pressure is rapidly building in the natural gas and electricity markets as well. Almost three quarters of all natural gas reserves are located in the Middle East and Eurasia: Russia, Iran,

and Qatar hold 58 percent of global reserves. Back in 2004, the Energy Information Administration projected natural gas consumption worldwide would increase from 100 trillion cubic feet to 163 trillion cubic feet in 2030. More importantly, according to the report, while in 2004 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries accounted for 40 percent of global natural gas production and 52 percent of consumption, in 2030 they will produce 27 percent and consume 43 percent of global output. To put the numbers in perspective, 30 key market democracies will increase natural gas production by only 0.4 percent annually on average, while their consumption will grow at 1.2 percent each year. By 2030, more than one-third of the natural gas consumed by OECD countries will have to be imported.

In the electricity-generation sector, the United States finds itself in an especially difficult situation because of decades of neglect, especially in the area of nuclear power. Since the 1979 Three Mile Island incident, building nuclear plants in the United States has been all but politically impossible. Most estimates also find that prospects for expansion of hydroelectric power are limited, as most high-elevation water sources of electricity have already been dammed. And the lead times needed to build coal-fired plants are crippling: obtaining a new permit for a coal-fired plant in the U.S. takes five years on average. With the prices of oil and natural gas soaring worldwide, oil- and gas-generated electricity will inevitably lead to higher electricity prices, further undermining the competitive position of U.S. industry.

Today the triple pressure of foreign government-controlled access to oil, the skyrocketing price of natural gas, and the insufficient power-generation sector makes energy the central national-security

issue for the United States. And the deteriorating situation in the Middle East only compounds stress on the already precarious supply chain. Those anxious about the current combination of high demand and limited supply should consider the impact of a wider war in the Middle East. With oil soaring toward \$300 a barrel, there would be no security issue on the horizon other than energy.

In the new security environment, the United States has a choice: continue on the current path of energy dependence in a non-market-driven pricing environment—with ever-greater balance of payment problems, deindustrialization, transfer of national wealth to the oil producers, and gradual loss of sovereignty—or push with all available government and industry resources to move away from fossil fuels.

After four decades of arguments that globalization has all but obliterated traditional realist concerns about resources, we are about to learn again that there is no substitute for controlling your energy supply. For the United States, an energy policy that makes us independent of foreign energy sources should be our most critical national security goal. We simply cannot continue to transfer hundreds of billions of dollars every year to buy a commodity whose price is arbitrarily set by foreign governments, and in the process bleed the national wealth it took America two centuries to accumulate. ■

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*Andrew A. Michta is professor of National Security Studies at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Germany. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.*

# Catholics Without Borders

The Church struggles to balance national sovereignty and Christian charity.

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

AT THE PHILADELPHIA Convention for the Common Good, a gathering of Catholics committed to “social justice,” Sister Kathleen Erikson testified about the changes she’s witnessed at the U.S. border at Anthony, New Mexico. “Fifteen years ago, border agents could allow people to cross without visas because they knew them. ‘Oh, that’s Rosa looking to buy groceries.’” But over the past decade, those human relationships and humane exceptions have been eclipsed by what she calls “the militarization of the border.” In her county, the best paying jobs are now at a new detention center for illegal immigrants. One woman held there told Sister Erikson, “I feel like a cockroach. They can do anything to me in this country.” A guard at the facility confessed to her, “Sister, I have to leave my heart at home. I cannot listen to their stories. I have to do my duty.” Erikson held back tears as she recounted the struggle between mercy and order, between those Catholics who guard the border and those who cross it.

The same tensions pull at the Catholic Church as it engages the immigration debate. According to a recent Zogby poll, 66 percent of American Catholics support more restrictions on immigration. Yet Catholic charity groups and activists have been leaders in supporting family reunification among migrants and providing social services to recent immigrants (legal and illegal) in their parishes and communities. These groups often support sanctuary movements that help

border-crossers evade law enforcement. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has vocally supported the comprehensive immigration reform proposals of President Bush and Sens. John McCain and Ted Kennedy.

Though there is no doctrinal commitment on immigration in Catholic theology, the Church sees in refugee families a reflection of the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt. Reflecting on this image in a 1952 encyclical, *Exsul Familia Nazarethana*, Pope Pius XII wrote, “In order that this example and these consoling thoughts would not grow dim but rather offer refugees and migrants a comfort in their trials, and foster Christian hope, the Church has to look after them with special care and unremitting aid.”

This landmark document, the first modern statement by a pope on immigration, was released when many refugees from World War II were still unsettled and Communist nations had outlawed nearly all emigration. Pius XII pointedly cited the care the Church had given refugee families that fled to the Philippines from Communist China. Notably, this document establishes that Church custom, since at least the 13th century, was to minister to migrants in their native languages.

Pius XII also drew special attention to the example of the United States: “Toward the end of the 19th century ... great waves of people left Europe and moved especially from Italy to America. As usual the Catholic Church devoted special effort and care to the spiritual welfare of these emigrants.” Though

Catholics were present at America’s founding—Charles Carroll, a Catholic from Maryland, was a signatory to the Declaration of Independence—the American Church’s identity is intimately connected with the rush of Italian, Polish, and Irish immigrants that Pius recounts. Generations of American Catholics were educated in parochial schools, where the curriculum highlighted the unique achievements of Catholic immigrants in America and also the discrimination they overcame. Few Catholics who attended religious schools are unfamiliar with Thomas Nast’s famous cartoon that featured bishops’ mitres opening like the jaws of crocodiles as they came ashore from the East River.

The Catholic Church in America is enjoying steady growth due to the current wave of immigration from Mexico and Latin America. Nearly a third of U.S. Catholics are Hispanic, and a recent Pew report projects that this figure will be closer to 50 percent in 25 years. As Catholics of European descent leave the Church, it is no surprise that American prelates have been advocating a generous and liberalized immigration policy.

Over 80 dioceses have launched local “Justice for Immigrants” campaigns in the past decade, and bishops often provide priests to speak at pro-immigration rallies and marches. Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington D.C. has analogized the struggles of recent immigrants with those of American blacks during the civil-rights movement. McCarrick has also couched the bish-

ops' support for amnesty in terms of practicality: "In our view, only a comprehensive approach to immigration reform will effectively address our nation's immigration crisis."

Last year, J. Kevin Appleby, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' director of policy for migration and refugee services, raised the stakes by suggesting a moral obligation: "Comprehensive immigration reform is the only humane solution to the problem of illegal immigration." Appleby's statement struck particularly left-wing chords. The bishops, he wrote, supported "earned legalization" policies that would make citizens out of 12-20 million illegal aliens. The "antidote to illegal immigration" is not consistent enforcement of America's border and immigration laws but the uprooting of global poverty.

Other prelates have taken the Church's liberal immigration stance even farther. After the House passed an enforcement-first bill in 2006, Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahoney announced that he would instruct priests and workers in his diocese to disobey certain provisions if they became law. He stated that a nation's right to control its borders is superceded by the right of the poor and the starving to immigrate and went so far as to imply that immigration restrictionists would not enter heaven: "Anything that tears down one group of people or one person, anything that is a negative in our community, disqualifies us from being part of the eternal city." Mahoney has inspired a sanctuary movement that seeks to protect illegal immigrants from deportation.

Catholics who share this view often have an expansive sense of doctrinal orthodoxy. Cardinal Mahoney has long been a target of conservative critics for his generous treatment of clerical child-abusers and his condescending attitude toward liturgical traditionalists. Sister Erikson was introduced to the Conven-

tion for the Common Good as an expert in "evolutionary spirituality," an indication that she follows the teaching of the French Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, whose work synthesizing the theories of evolution and Catholic spirituality was suppressed by the Holy Office and condemned by 20th-century Catholic philosophers Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson. In her plea for global social justice, Erikson urged the convention's attendees to recognize that "We [Americans] are the haves," and immigrants are the have-nots.

Mahoney and Erikson may be extreme cases, but the gap between the opinions of Church leaders and laity remains wide and deep. According to a 2004 Pew study, 80 percent of Catholics reject open borders. But in a Beliefnet.com interview, McCarrick broadly indicted these Catholic laypersons as heartless and gullible: "Many Catholic people in the pews do see the value of these people. ... I'd like them to read what the bishops are saying. I think if they read it and weren't just getting the propaganda, they will see it differently."

Despite these strong statements in favor of liberalized immigration, the Church's universalism and tradition of siding with migrants does not necessarily make it an enemy of American sovereignty. Even McCarrick has admitted as much: "The Catholic Church acknowledges and supports the right of a sovereign nation to secure its borders, most particularly at a time in which national security is in question." McCarrick doesn't divide the world into rich and poor and recognizes the unique value and character of nations. "The most important right people have is the right to make it where they have roots planted," he told press outlets in 2006. Pope John Paul II, who spoke publicly about a "human right to immigrate," maintained that people had a duty "to defend their own existence and essen-

tial identity of their nation from the risks of a destruction generated from outside or of a decomposition from inside." Pius XII's encyclical valorized the work of those who "so facilitated the assimilation of the uncultured ... whom they introduced both to the Christian religion and to a new culture."

Some prelates like Bishop Robert Baker of Charleston have gone out of their way to emphasize that border restrictionists can be Catholics in good standing and that immigration policy is best left to the deliberations of citizens and their elected leaders. Steve Gajdosik, the Charleston diocese's director of media relations, said in 2006 that the local Catholic Church would not take a stand on immigration policy: "It's not a doctrinal issue, it's a prudential issue. Well-formed, faithful Catholics and Christians can take different opinions." Thus Catholics are free to judge for themselves how best to "care for the stranger in your midst" while defending the "essential identity" of the nation.

But Catholics who favor tighter controls on the border confront a dilemma: mass immigration is already transforming their Church. In the middle of the last century, the Catholic Church in America was robust, growing steadily through the natural increase of its adherents and the conversion of fellow citizens. Its members increasingly assimilated into all levels of American society. Now the parishes and schools that nourished white ethnic Catholics are closing, and the Church's future growth is dependent on immigration. The influx of Hispanics into America has returned the Church to its late-19th century model as the home and advocate of the recently arrived, the poor, and unasimilated. If Americans continue the neglectful border policies of the recent past, the Church has little choice but to accommodate and welcome the onrushing future. ■



# Potemkin Missiles

Earlier this month, the front pages of the world press blossomed with photos of four Iranian rockets, fired in salvo, heading skyward.

The image was powerful and the message reinforced by the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. Should Israel attack Iran, said Ali Shira, Tel Aviv will be “set on fire.”

U.S. reaction was swift and bristling. “Rice Says U.S. Will Defend Gulf,” declared the headline over the AP story that began: “Condoleezza Rice flexed America’s muscles in the Middle East Thursday, forcefully warning Iran the U.S. won’t ignore threats and will take any action necessary to defend friends and interests in the Persian Gulf...”

“Rice said Iran’s leaders should understand that Washington won’t dismiss provocations from Tehran and has the ability to counter them. ‘I don’t think the Iranians are too confused, either, about the capability and the power of the United States to do exactly that.’”

And what were the results of this missile crisis in the Gulf? Tensions rose, strengthening Tehran’s embattled Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. And oil prices shot from \$136 a barrel to a record \$147.

That \$11-a-barrel spike alone translates into \$25 million a day in fresh revenue for Ahmadinejad and company. And as the United States imports 13 million of the 20 million barrels we daily consume, that \$11 spike in price translates into \$143 million more sucked out of the U.S. economy every day—into the coffers of Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and OPEC. Can we not see who benefits and who pays for this war talk?

Every day the war drums beat, the mullahs get richer, and we get poorer. Which raises the question: was this mini-missile crisis cooked up by the mullahs to rip off Uncle Sam? For by the week’s end, it appeared the Americans had been had, big time. The *New York Times* reported that the photo of the four Iranian missiles fired in salvo had been doctored.

One rocket appears twice in the same photo. The large missile, on inspection, was not the new Shahab-3b, which has a range of 1,200 miles, but a Shahab-3a, with a range of 900 miles. It is no longer in production. The missiles fired with the Shahab-3a turned out to be Scuds, short-range missiles that do not threaten Israel. The second day’s firing turns out to have been of a single anti-ship missile. Iranian TV showed one firing from three angles, making it appear as though three missiles had been fired in succession. “The bottom line is that the Iranians are tweaking our noses,” said Charles Vick, an expert on Iran’s missile forces.

Under Secretary of State Nick Burns then splashed cold water on Iran’s alleged crash program to acquire nuclear weapons. “Iran has not yet perfected [uranium] enrichment,” said Burns, “and, as a direct result of UN sanctions, Iran’s ability to procure technology or items of significance to its missile programs, even dual-use items, is being impaired.”

The former head of Mossad, Shabtai Shavit, says Iran may be one year away

from a bomb—and will use it on Israel. But according to the latest United States National Intelligence Estimate, Iran shut down its nuclear weapons program in 2003.

Iran, says Burns, has not yet mastered the technology of converting uranium gas into fuel for use in power plants, let alone the stuff of bombs. And even if Iran were one day able to enrich to weapons grade, she would still have to build and test a nuclear device, then weaponize it to fit atop a missile and deploy a missile force. All in all, says Burns, Iran’s progress with uranium enrichment has been “modest.”

There is thus no imminent crisis to justify war on Iran. Yet what is Nancy Pelosi’s Democratic House doing? Some 220 members, a majority, have endorsed House Concurrent Resolution 362. This virtual war resolution “demands” that President Bush initiate a blockade to halt all Iranian imports of refined petroleum products and impose “stringent inspection requirements on all persons, vehicles, ships, planes, trains, and cargo entering or departing Iran.”

A Democratic House that came to power denouncing the rush to war on Iraq is about to vote to demand that Bush commit an act of war against Iran. The front men for 362 are liberal Gary Ackerman of New York and conservative Mike Pence of Indiana. But the juice behind them is that of the Israeli lobby, AIPAC, which is marching in step with Israel.

Israel and its Fifth Column in this city seek to stampede us into war with Iran. Bush should rebuff them, and the American people should tell their congressmen: You vote for 362, we don’t vote for you. ■

# These Colors Run

At the 1908 London Olympics, the Irish American Athletic Club brought home gold for the red, white, and blue.

**By Roger D. McGrath**

MOST FANS of the Olympics Games recall that the United States boycotted the quadrennial event in 1980 as a protest against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Many may still remember that black sprinters Tommy Smith and John Carlos raised gloved fists on the medal stand in 1968. A few may recall the bloody water polo match between the Hungarian and Soviet teams in the '56 Games. Histories of the Olympics always mention that Hitler used the '36 Games in Berlin to promote German supremacy. This year, there have been protests against the 2008 host and her occupation of Tibet.

Politics, however, entered the modern Olympics for the first time in a major way a century ago in the 1908 Games held at White City, near Shepherd's Bush in London. The Royal Navy still ruled the high seas, and the sun never set on the British Empire. To many Brits, the United States was still nothing more than a wayward colony.

When the American team arrived in London, the English were dismayed to learn that the U.S. track and field team was composed largely of Irishmen, either Irish-born or born in the United States to Irish immigrant parents. Most of the Irish-American Olympians trained together at Celtic Park, a seven-acre athletic facility long since developed for housing in what is today the Sunnyside neighborhood of Queens. Many of the athletes, especially the weightmen, were also New York City policemen. Britain

had already set the stage for fireworks by prohibiting Ireland to field her own team, claiming, "Ireland is not a nation." The Irish members of the American team were fighting mad, and the '08 Games would become known as the "Battle of Shepherd's Bush."

As King Edward VII declared the Fourth Olympiad open on July 13, the American team found itself positioned in the parade immediately in front of the "British Colonies" with the United Kingdom close behind. The symbolism could not have been more obvious. One by one the national teams—France, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Russia, Greece, Turkey, Germany, Sweden, Norway, and a dozen others—entered the stadium. As they marched by the royal box, each team dipped its flag to King Edward. A hard rain that had earlier drenched the stadium had stopped and the sun momentarily broke through the clouds. God seemed to be smiling on the empire. Then came the American team, including world-record hammer thrower and County Tipperary-born New York City cop Matthew J. McGrath. When the Americans approached the royal box, the 6'2", 245-pound McGrath broke ranks and stepped up beside the team's flag bearer. "Dip that banner and you're in a hospital tonight," said McGrath. The Stars and Stripes passed by flying high.

The act was unprecedented. The English were outraged. Later, at a news conference, veteran Olympian and world-record discus thrower Martin J.

Sheridan, a County Mayo-born New York City policeman, spoke on behalf of McGrath and other team members by pointing to the flag and exclaiming, "This flag dips to no earthly king." A century later Old Glory continues to pass the reviewing stand unbowed.

Preliminary heats for the 1500 meters were run on the afternoon of opening day. The English held the drawings for heat assignments in private, and the American runners were bunched together in two heats, greatly increasing the likelihood that they would eliminate one another. U.S. team commissioner James E. Sullivan—for whom the Sullivan Award is named—protested, but throughout the Games the English hosts continued to hold the drawings in what they described as "the usual way."

J.P. Sullivan of the Irish American Athletic Club of New York City took the first heat in the 1500 meters, and Mel Sheppard, a member of the same club, won the second. Several other Americans ran in the same heats and were eliminated, while Englishmen had been strategically distributed in heats three through eight. In the final a day later, Sullivan and Sheppard found themselves facing five Englishmen and a Canadian, whose points, should he place, would go to Britain. Englishmen Harold Wilson, the world-record holder, and Norman Hallows were considered the prohibitive favorites. "Mel, you might as well stay in the stands," American coach Mike Murphy told Sheppard. "You don't

have a chance.” Murphy knew Sheppard ran his best when angry, and Sheppard was steaming.

The English ran as a team, and as they rounded the final turn, they appeared to have the Americans boxed and out of contention. With a tremendous burst, Sheppard broke free and accelerated down the homestretch to win going away. He set an Olympic record. Not bad

broke the world record in the discus 15 times.

Although he was the reigning Olympic champion in the shot put, Sheridan did not compete in London. Ralph Rose of San Francisco won the gold, with the silver going to Denis Horgan of Ireland. Horgan was another New York City cop, but had retired from the force following a brawl that left him

missed. The silver went to Cornelius Leahy of Ireland, but his points went to Britain. The next day Francis C. Irons of the Chicago Athletic Club took the gold in the broad jump, and Daniel J. Kelly of the Irish American A.C. took the silver. On the track, the club’s Charles J. Bacon set an Olympic and a world record in the 400-meter hurdles.

The United States, and particularly the Irish American Athletic Club, was running away with the track and field events. British newspapers made their displeasure known. U.S. coach Mike Murphy warned team members that British officials would be looking for ways to disqualify them. The Americans did not have to wait for long for Murphy’s prediction to come true. In the 400-meter final, held the day after Bacon’s record-setting win, American J.C. Carpenter won with a furious finish. American W.C. Robbins took second, and Englishman Wyndham Halswelle third. British officials yelled foul, claiming that Carpenter had drifted wide coming out of the final turn and had interfered with Halswelle. The officials conferred and declared the race void.

According to a *New York Times* reporter,

A great British cheer broke out, and continued for several minutes, men who could not under any circumstances have seen the incident crying ‘Foul!’ louder than those sitting opposite the spot where the alleged foul was said to have taken place, and who, seeing Halswelle taking a wide turn, thought it a mistake in judgement, as he had lots of room to pass Carpenter on either side.

The manager of the American team, Matthew P. Halpin, lodged a protest on behalf of Carpenter. A special committee of British officials met privately, taking testimony from the officials who

WHEN **KING EDWARD** PRESENTED THE IRISHMEN THEIR MEDALS, MCGRATH RESPONDED TO HIS COMMENTS IN “**A BROGUE TWO SIZES WIDER**” THAN NORMAL.

for someone who had been rejected earlier that year by the police department for what medical examiners thought was a bad heart.

In the meantime, the final in the hammer throw had gotten underway. McGrath and his teammate, John J. Flanagan, another County Tipperary-born New York City cop and the reigning Olympic champion, exchanged the lead with nearly every toss and alternated breaking the Olympic record. A torn ligament in his knee finally slowed McGrath, and he had to settle for silver. His gold medal would come in the 1912 Olympics. A County Cork-born athlete, Cornelius Walsh of Canada, took the bronze. When King Edward presented the Irishmen their medals, McGrath responded to his comments in “a brogue two sizes wider” than normal.

Two days later, New York City’s finest were at it again, sweeping the discus final. Tall, muscular Martin Sheridan took the gold. He would also win the “Greek Style” discus throw and take the bronze in the standing broad jump. The American Irishman was becoming a legend. In three Olympiads he won five gold medals, three silver, and one bronze, and from 1902 through 1911 he

severely injured. He returned to his native Ireland and slowly began to recover and train again. He was galled that his second-place points would go to Britain.

Mel Sheppard was back on the track for the 800-meter final. In the final for Britain were Theodore Just and Ian Fairburn-Crawford. British coaches determined that Fairburn-Crawford should play the role of the race rabbit and lure Sheppard into running an overly fast pace and dissipate the latter’s famous kick. At the crack of the starter’s pistol, Fairburn-Crawford bounded into a near sprint. Sheppard refused to take the bait, setting his own pace, then beginning a withering kick with about 300 meters to go. The Irish American Athletic Club member pulled away from the field with ease, winning the gold in not only an Olympic- but a world-record time. Fairburn-Crawford dropped back long before the finish and failed to medal.

On the infield another member of the Irish American A.C. was winning the high jump. Harry F. Porter easily cleared 6’3” to set an Olympic record and then had the bar raised to 6’6” in an attempt to break Michael F. Sweeney’s world record of 6’5 5/8”. He only narrowly



had alleged foul and from Halswelle but refusing to allow American officials or Carpenter to attend the meeting or submit written statements. Predictably, the British officials ruled that the race would be rerun and Carpenter disqualified. "Never in my life," said U.S. commissioner James Sullivan, "and I have been attending athletic meetings for 31 years, have I witnessed a scene that struck me as being so unsportsmanlike and unfair as that in which the officials participated. ... The race was as fair as any race run."

On the contrary, said *The Times* of London, Carpenter ran "diagonally" across the track and "elbowed" Halswelle. Moreover, asserted the paper, Carpenter's actions were the result of "a definite and carefully thought out plan." No matter that none of the British reporters had been close enough to the scene to describe it accurately. Standing on that fateful final turn and watching the race carefully, however, was Ray Ewry of the New York A.C., who won gold medals in both the standing broad jump and the standing high jump. Ewry said that while Carpenter drifted wide he neither ran diagonally nor elbowed Halswelle. "I thought Halswelle lost his head," said Ewry. Carpenter said that he never made contact with Halswelle, who had plenty of room to pass on either side. "We just raced him off his feet," remarked Carpenter, "and he could not stand the pace." When the race was rerun, Halswelle was the only participant—the other runners refused to run without Carpenter. His "winning time" was two seconds slower than Carpenter's.

While the 400-meter controversy raged, the 200-meter final was run. Irish-born Canadian Robert Kerr won by inches over Irish American A.C. member and New York schoolboy Bobby Cloughen. Kerr's gold medal was tallied for Britain.

A new controversy erupted off the track in the tug-of-war event. Rules stated explicitly that participants must wear everyday footwear and that "no competitor shall wear prepared boots or shoes." When the American team arrived to tug against the British, they were astonished to see their counterparts, policemen from Liverpool, wearing specially constructed boots with steel rims around the soles. The Americans protested, but British officials claimed the boots were standard issue for Liverpool cops. After slipping and sliding on the wet turf, the Americans withdrew from the competition in disgust.

For the British version of fair play, though, nothing surpassed their actions during the marathon. Nearly 50 runners began the race at Windsor Castle. Three Englishmen alternately led the pack for the first half of the race. Carefully pacing themselves well to the rear were two

Britain—and the oldest runner, was in the lead. Dorando Pietri, an Italian pastry chef who did not weigh much more than 100 pounds, was in second. Hayes was in third. Spectators encouraged Hefferon. Some ran onto the course and slapped him on the back. He wasn't English, but he was the next best thing—a British subject. A fan rushed out and gave him a drink of water. Hefferon gulped it. A few hundred yards later he developed stomach cramps and slowed his pace. Pietri passed him. Then Hayes. After the race Hayes said, "I found out later that Hefferon was of Irish descent. If I had known, I would have talked with him."

Hayes was only 50 seconds behind Pietri and closing. But Pietri was about to enter the Olympic stadium and, once inside, would have only 385 yards to go on the track. As the diminutive Italian, seemingly impervious to the strain of the race, entered the stadium, he sud-

## BRITISH OFFICIALS CONTINUED TO ENCOURAGE, LIFT, DRAG, AND PUSH PIETRI TOWARD THE FINISH LINE.

members of the Irish American Athletic Club, John J. Hayes and Mike Ryan. Hayes was the 19-year-old son of immigrants from County Tipperary. He looked more like a muscular featherweight fighter than a marathoner. At the halfway point, he picked up the pace. "You're going too fast, Johnny," warned Ryan. "No, we've got to move now. Stick with me, Mike," replied Hayes. Ryan maintained the quicker pace for a time, but then dropped back. Hayes passed one runner after another until the leaders came within sight.

With two miles to go, it was a three-man race. Charles Hefferon, an Irishman from South Africa—a country that, like Ireland, Canada, and Australia, counted as part of Great

denly staggered. He turned in the wrong direction and could barely keep his legs moving. British officials grabbed him and put him back on track. He took a few steps and collapsed. Officials lifted him to his feet, steadied him, and helped him on his way. A few more steps and he collapsed again. The process was repeated.

Enter John J. Hayes, running strongly and smoothly. The packed stadium was now in a frenzy. British officials continued to encourage, lift, drag, and push Pietri toward the finish line. "He staggered along the cinder path like a man in a dream," said a reporter, "his gait being neither a walk nor a run, but simply a flounder, with arms shaking and legs tottering." Only yards short of

the finish line, Pietri collapsed for a fifth time. He lay there in a heap. Hayes was swinging around the track and about to enter the homestretch. Not just any official but the chief British official, Jack Andrews, lifted Pietri and dragged him across the finish line. Although such assistance was clearly a violation of Olympic rules, the British immediately raised the Italian flag and announced Pietri the winner of the marathon. The pastry chef from Capri didn't know or care. He was delirious and twitching and was carried from the stadium on a stretcher.

Hayes strode strongly across the finish line, appearing well able to continue for many more miles. He said the heat and humidity that took a toll on others bothered him little. "My father and grandfather were bakers, and I worked in a bakery as a boy. I'm used to the heat." He had watched as Pietri was carried across the finish line and thought he would surely be disqualified. Not if left up to the British. Only a formal protest by the United States succeeded in having Pietri knocked out of the competition.

The next day, Timothy J. Ahearne of Ireland won the hop, step, and jump, but his victory was tallied in Britain's column. Americans swept the high hurdles, and Mel Sheppard, running anchor, led the American team to the gold medal in the 1600-meter relay race, the final track and field event of the games.

Of the 23 individual championships in track and field, Americans won 13. Eight of the wins were by members of the Irish American Athletic Club. Seven individual championships were counted as British, but two of those were won by Irishmen and another by a South African. Englishmen accounted for only four gold medals, and one of those was Wyndham Halswelle's solo 400-meter victory. Two others came in walking events that had almost exclusively English participants.

Throughout the Games, the bias of the British officials was evident. "In nearly every event the boys had to compete not only against their competitors but against prejudiced judges," noted high-jump gold medalist Harry Porter. "The judges may not have been intentionally unfair, but they could not control their feelings, which were antagonistic to the Americans. This was especially true in the field events, where the boys came in closer contact with the judges. The Americans were continually nagged and made uncomfortable. The officials were discourteous to our men and, further, by their encouragement of the other men, tried to beat us."

The British officials understood that a larger drama was being played out on the Olympic fields at White City. The empire was losing a second time to American colonials and, to make it especially humiliating, the Americans were mostly Irish. The significance was not lost on Ireland. When Irish members of the American team arrived in Dublin after the Games, they were greeted by crowds of thousands. "The streets along the route to their hotel," reported the *New York Times*, "were completely blocked by Dublinites, and the enthusiasm displayed recalled the triumphant entries into the city of Parnell when he was at the height of his popularity." The Easter Rising would erupt less than eight years later and the war for independence four years after that.

The team members were also greeted like conquering heroes upon their return to New York, and a parade of thousands was held in their honor. President Teddy Roosevelt threw a party for them at his home at Oyster Bay. "By George! I am so glad to see all you boys," exclaimed the president. Mel Sheppard gave Roosevelt one of his Olympic gold medals. The president said that he could not possibly accept it. Sheppard pleaded with Roosevelt to take it, telling him not to worry, "I have two others." John J. Flanagan then gave Roosevelt one of his gold medals. The president was overwhelmed and said the medals would be among "my most treasured possessions." Irish American Athletic Club president P.J. Conway then made Roosevelt an honorary club member. Celebration of the team in song and story, poetry, and prose followed:

So Flanagan and Sheppard,  
McGrath and Sheridan  
Showed them all the kind of stuff's  
in a good Cork Yankee man  
At jumping too, and running they  
showed the English tricks,  
Although they knew John Bull  
could sprint since back in '76.  
They chewed them up, and spat  
them out, and trounced them  
good and sound,  
That's how the Yankee beat the  
world in good old London town.  
So let the Eagle scream, me boys,  
from 'Frisco to New York.  
From Dublin town to Galway Bay,  
from Derry down to Cork.  
Hang out the starry banner and  
never take a dare,  
For they still raise brawny Yan-  
kees in Donegal and Clare.

— E.P. McKenna

"How the Yankees Beat the World" ■

*Roger D. McGrath is an historian in California and the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen and Vigilantes.*

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# The Man From Hyde Park

On the eve of Independence Day, Barack Obama signaled that he was altering aspects of his position on the war in Iraq. The Democratic nominee had

previously promised a firm 16-month timetable for withdrawal. But addressing reporters in Fargo, North Dakota, he said, "I've always said that the pace of withdrawal would be dictated by the safety and security of our troops and the need to maintain stability. That assessment has not changed, and when I go to Iraq and I have a chance to talk to some of the commanders on the ground, I'm sure I'll have more information and will continue to refine my policies."

Obama's opposition to the Iraq War and his pledge to withdraw all combat troops by mid-2010 have been the core of his claim to superior judgement and principal features distinguishing his foreign-policy vision from John McCain's. After two weeks of reversals, this "refinement" came at the worst possible time and drew renewed attention to Obama's anemic record as a war opponent and his habit of accommodating the prevailing consensus.

Obama immediately recognized the political danger posed by any perceived slackening of his opposition to the war and reaffirmed his intention to bring the troops home. But the promised consultation with "commanders on the ground" and suggestion that withdrawal schedules should be premised on Iraqi stability bear eerie traces of President Bush's deference to field officers and open-ended pledges that "as the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down." Making U.S. withdrawal contingent on Iraqi stability puts the American interest second—and ensures that we will main-

tain the occupation for years to come. What Obama's admirers praise as pragmatic adjustment appears to skeptics as willingness to revise away even his most basic policy commitments.

Obama's dramatic rise in Illinois and national politics has been forever linked with the speech he gave to an antiwar rally in Chicago in the autumn of 2002. Given the pro-war fervor sweeping the country at that time, Obama has been credited with great political courage. But he was taking a stand that a left-liberal Democratic state senator from South Side Chicago was obliged to take. According to Ryan Lizza's recent article in *The New Yorker* on Obama's Chicago roots, the organizer of the rally, Bettylu Saltzman, said of Obama, "He was a Hyde Park state senator. He had to oppose the war!"

This was the beginning of what Bill Clinton would dub "the biggest fairy tale I have heard," referring to Obama's self-presentation as a consistent, outspoken antiwar leader. During his brief tenure in the Senate, Obama avoided taking a leadership role on the war and typically voted with his formerly pro-war Democratic colleagues rather than the stronger antiwar wing of the party aligned with Wisconsin's Russ Feingold. As Robert Dreyfuss reported in an extensive article on Obama's foreign policy in *The Nation*, a veteran House Democratic staffer noted, "In that very critical period from January to mid-April 2007, when we were trying to reduce funding for the war, he was very hard to pin

down." What Obama's "refinement" represents is not so much a major break with his previous policy as confirmation of his cautious, self-interested positioning all along.

Had the Illinois legislator not been identified as an early opponent of the war, it is difficult to imagine how this first-term senator could have made foreign-policy judgement a central theme of his campaign. Without the distinction for prescience he earned by taking the conventional Hyde Park position, Obama would have faced much more resistance from progressive activists otherwise skeptical of his accommodating rhetorical style and paeans to bipartisanship. More importantly, he would not have been able to use Hillary Clinton's support for the invasion against her in what became the most effective attack against her claims of experience. Yet even in his antiwar stance, he was engaged in accommodation with the prevailing winds of his immediate political environment.

This brings us to the most appalling of Obama's recent reversals, his embrace of the FISA Amendments Act, the compromise bill that grants telecom immunity and authorizes ongoing warrantless wiretapping. Obama had promised to support a filibuster against it, but voted for both cloture and final passage of the bill in a transparent betrayal of both his campaign pledge and American civil liberties. If he was willing to throw out a clear promise on such a vital matter of constitutional protection to avoid being attacked as weak on national security, why should antiwar voters have any confidence that he will not continue to "refine" his commitment on withdrawal until it no longer exists? ■



# Going Off the Rawls

Libertarians have adopted the Left's favorite modern philosopher, but that doesn't make him right.

By David Gordon

WRITING IN THE *Times Literary Supplement*, the British philosopher Jonathan Wolff recently observed that while there might be a dispute about the second most important political philosopher of the 20th century, there could be no dispute about the most important: John Rawls. His student Samuel Freeman says that Rawls's work will be recognized "for centuries to come."

The basis of this acclaim is readily apparent. Rawls provided a comprehensive philosophical system that justified the main preoccupations of the center-left, which dominates academic life, and put classical liberals and conservatives at a disadvantage. Indeed, Rawls's doctrine of "public reason" would prevent conservatives from bringing many of their most distinctive concerns into public discourse at all. Nevertheless, since his death in 2002, a few libertarians have sought to appropriate Rawls for their own purposes.

Rawls's stellar reputation stems mainly from one book. When he published *A Theory of Justice* in 1971, he awoke, like Byron, to find himself famous. Before that, Rawls was well known in philosophy departments as one of the brightest people working in ethics, but he had written only a few articles. People in the field knew he had been composing a major treatise, and when it finally appeared, most reviewers were ecstatic. Stuart Hampshire, writing in the *New York Review of*

*Books*, called the book the most important work in moral philosophy since the end of World War II.

Rawls was born into a well-connected family; his father was one of the most prominent attorneys in Baltimore. He attended Princeton University, fought in the Pacific during World War II, and thereafter led the life of a quiet academic. For most of his career he taught at Harvard, where generations of graduate students regarded him with affection. He was modest and considerate of students. In one famous anecdote, he worried that the sun might be shining in the eyes of a student he was examining and asked whether he would like another seat. He prepared his lectures carefully, though according to one of his students Rawls was the most boring speaker he had ever heard.

To understand Rawls's theory, one first needs to grasp what he was reacting against. The dominant approach in pre-Rawls political philosophy was utilitarianism: how can we maximize the satisfaction of people's preferences? At first sight, utilitarianism seems plausible—what else should we do but try to achieve the most satisfaction possible for everyone?—but the theory has some odd consequences. Why, for example, is rape wrong? A utilitarian would have to answer that the pain to the victim outweighs the pleasure to the rapist. Surely, though, this is not why rape is wrong; the pleasure the rapist gets shouldn't be counted at all, and the whole thing

sounds ridiculous. (By the way, Judge Richard Posner, who might be called Jeremy Bentham *redivivus*, accepts just this view of rape in his *Sex and Reason*.)

As Rawls pointed out, there is a more general problem that throws utilitarianism into question. Some people's interests, or even lives, can be sacrificed if doing so will maximize total satisfaction. Suppose executing the Danish cartoonists will appease a Muslim mob, and that doing so increases total satisfaction. A utilitarian would have to endorse the execution. As Rawls says, "there is a sense in which classical utilitarianism fails to take seriously the distinction between persons."

This verdict was in one respect surprising. Utilitarianism in its origins was strongly connected with classical liberalism, a view that stresses individual freedom. Two of the greatest utilitarians, John Stuart Mill and Henry Sidgwick, were classical liberals, though not of the strictest observance. As the examples discussed above illustrate, though, utilitarianism can have anti-individualist implications. Rawls himself viewed his assault on utilitarianism as a defense of liberalism, not an attack on it. But he was decidedly a modern, rather than a classical, liberal. Indeed, Rawls became the official philosopher of the contemporary democratic welfare state.

He offers an ingenious substitute for utilitarianism. Instead of directly advancing a theory of his own, Rawls asks what we can do when faced with

the fact that people do not agree on a common conception of the good. He answers that even if people do not agree on the good, they can accept a fair procedure for settling what the principles of justice should be. This is key to Rawls's theory: whatever arises from a fair procedure is just.

But what is a fair procedure? Rawls again has an ingenious approach, his famous veil of ignorance. Suppose five children have to divide a cake among themselves. One child cuts the cake, but he does not know who will get the shares. He is likely to divide the cake into equal shares, an arrangement that the children, no doubt grudgingly, will admit to be fair. By denying the child information that would bias the result, a fair outcome can be achieved.

Rawls's veil of ignorance generalizes the point of this example. He asks that we imagine a situation, which he calls the original position, in which people do not know their own abilities, tastes, and conceptions of the good. Under this limit, individuals motivated by self-interest endeavor to arrive at principles of justice. People behind the veil of ignorance are self-interested but in crucial respects ignorant.

Rawls thinks that everyone, regardless of his plan of life or conception of the good, will want certain "primary goods." These include rights and liberties, powers and opportunities, income and wealth, and self-respect. Without these primary goods, no one can accomplish his goals, whatever they may be. Hence, individuals in the original position will agree that everyone should get at least a minimum amount of these primary goods. This is an inherently redistributionist idea, since the primary goods are not natural properties of human beings. If someone lacks these primary goods, they must be provided for him, if necessary at the expense of others.

Concretely, Rawls thinks that people will agree to two principles of justice. The first calls for the greatest liberty for each person, consistent with equal liberty for all. Surely, he suggests, even if you lack information about your actual goals, as the veil prescribes, you will want to be free to pursue whatever these goals turn out to be. Not only will people want liberty, Rawls thinks, they will give this principle priority over the other one, the principle of difference, which in part deals with distribution of economic goods. The two principles cannot be "traded off" against each other: economic equality, for example, cannot be achieved at the expense of liberty.

In this view, Rawls sounds like a classical liberal, and some philosophers, most famously the great Oxford legal thinker H.L.A. Hart, criticized Rawls for giving undue priority to liberty at the expense of other social goods. Rawls's liberty principle appeals to the so-called "Rawlsians," a group of young libertarians who want to combine the views of Rawls with those of Friedrich Hayek, but Rawls himself was no Hayekian.

Indeed, Rawls's greatest critic was a libertarian, his Harvard philosophy department colleague Robert Nozick, who raises a key objection to Rawls in his classic 1974 work *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. Nozick notes that Rawls does not include property rights among the liberties protected by his first principle. To the contrary, Rawls starts off by assuming that the people in the original position have the task of distributing all the property in society. If one denies this, and, like Nozick, thinks that people start off with property rights, then there will be little or no scope for the difference principle to operate.

Rawls and Nozick were at one time on very good terms; Rawls thanks Nozick profusely in the preface to *TJ*, as the book is affectionately known in the

trade. Later, they became more distant: when Rawls's *Political Liberalism* appeared, Nozick in conversation was quite dismissive of its merits. In *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, he had praised *A Theory of Justice* as a great work of philosophy, but he told me that he had polished off *Political Liberalism* in one lecture. Nozick, by the way, resented the frequent complaint that he did not respond to his critics. He wondered why people did not criticize Rawls for failing to respond, except very indirectly, to his arguments.

The most controversial part of Rawls's theory is the famous difference principle. (More exactly, the second part of this principle. The first part calls for equal opportunity and will not affect our discussion.) Rawls contends that people in the original position would start by wanting to distribute wealth and income equally. Why should some get more than others? Equality is the default position, but this is soon modified. People realize that we respond to incentives. If unequal incomes are allowed, this might turn out to be to the advantage of everyone. To insist on absolute equality, even if this left everyone worse off, would be cutting off one's nose to spite one's face.

To deal with this situation, Rawls proposes that all inequalities must be to the advantage of the least well off group. Rawls was not an extreme egalitarian, content that everyone should be miserable, as long as they were equally so. But we now arrive at the fundamental presupposition of Rawls's theory. Suppose that someone objects that the difference principle is unfair. "If I am talented and am able to earn more than most people, why should my income be limited to what turns out to be best for the worst off? Do I not have the right to benefit from my superior talents?" Rawls's theory does not rule out the competitive pursuit of excellence. But he believes

individuals cannot justifiably complain if they do not benefit fully from the fruits of their superior achievement.

Rawls argues that people do not deserve to reap the rewards of these talents. Tiger Woods earns millions of dollars because he is superlatively good at golf. Yet his abilities do not stem from any special virtue on his part. He was just lucky that, by some combination of heredity and environment, he ended up with superior skills. He is lucky in another respect: market demand for golf enables his talent to achieve vast returns. Because market demand for checkers players is much less, the late Marion Tinsley, whose skill at checkers was comparable to that of Woods in golf, did not earn comparable returns on his talent.

One might object that luck is not the full story. However talented he may be, Woods had to practice countless hours from his early youth to get where he is today. Does he not deserve to benefit from his hard work? Rawls has an answer that I suspect readers will find surprising. He thinks that if you have the personality trait of working hard, this too is a matter of luck. Even though Woods practiced strenuously, he does not deserve to benefit from this trait.

As Thomas Pogge has noted in his recent biography *John Rawls: His Life and Theory of Justice*, Rawls was especially sensitive to issues of luck because of a sad occurrence in his own life. Two of his brothers died in childhood because they had contracted fatal illnesses from him. Pogge calls the loss of the brothers the “most important events in Jack’s childhood.” In 1928, the 7-year-old Rawls contracted diphtheria. His brother Bobby, younger by 20 months, visited him in his room and was fatally infected. The next winter, Rawls contracted pneumonia. Another younger brother, Tommy, caught the illness from him and died.

Rawls’s extreme views about merit have exposed him to withering criticism, and Nozick was in the forefront here. First, if you don’t deserve your talents or personality traits, what is left? Rawls has evacuated persons of their attributes, leaving virtually nothing behind. Further, suppose Rawls is right that people do not deserve their superior abilities—that is, they do not acquire these talents by superior moral merit. It does not follow that they are not entitled to benefit from them. Why does the fact that you do not “deserve,” in Rawls’s sense, your superior talents imply that they ought to be transferred to society to be managed for the benefit of the least well off? Rawls, though ostensibly devoted to liberty, winds up with a system in which society controls virtually all the important human attributes.

Despite this collectivist principle, it is possible to interpret Rawls in a way that is quite compatible with classical liberalism. One might think that an unrestricted free market best promotes the interests of the least well off class. If so, the difference principle will forbid any egalitarian redistribution of wealth or income. Raymond Geuss, a disciple of Theodor Adorno stationed at Cambridge, has denounced Rawls for this reason. Can one not use the difference principle, he asks, to justify any degree of inequality? Rawls himself does not interpret his principle this way, but his theory does not rule it out. The Rawlsians interpret the difference principle in exactly this fashion. (Incidentally, one writer who thinks Rawls can be read in a way consistent with conservatism is the philosopher’s son, Alec Rawls, though he has so far not published much on this topic.)

The Nobel Prize-winning economist Friedrich von Hayek was for a time sympathetic to Rawls, though not because of the difference principle.

Rather, he liked Rawls’s emphasis on structural principles of justice. (Rawls does not seem to have reciprocated Hayek’s esteem: the Austrian is not cited in *TJ*.) In Rawls’s system, people in the original position do not assign shares of wealth to particular people: they set up general institutions for society. This fitted in with Hayek’s emphasis on the rule of law. When Hayek opposed “social justice,” what he had in mind was a system that gives orders to particular persons, ungoverned by general law. Hayek later said that he was surprised by the direction in which Rawls took his theory; but Rawlsians, such as Will Wilkinson of the Cato Institute, continue to use Rawls for libertarian ends.

The Rawlsians believe that Rawls’s notion of choice behind the veil of ignorance is a good starting point for political philosophy. They argue that libertarian principles would be chosen in the original position. But the convergence between Rawls and Hayek can be looked at from the other direction. Hayek, a great Austrian economist and one of the greatest classical liberals of the 20th century, was not all together opposed to the welfare state. Much to the distress of more thoroughgoing libertarians like Ludwig von Mises and Murray Rothbard, in *The Road to Serfdom* and *The Constitution of Liberty* Hayek defended small-scale welfare legislation.

There are other aspects to Rawls’s thought, however, that should give libertarians, and certainly conservatives, pause. Rawls never abandoned the principal tenets of his theory of justice, but in his 1993 work *Political Liberalism*, he changed course in one respect. He began emphasizing that in modern constitutional democracies like the United States, disagreements over fundamental values and issues such as abortion can threaten the stability of

society. Given the degrees of disharmony, what are we to do?

His answer recalls the original position of *TJ*. Individuals should, once more, put aside their own conceptions of the good. But this time, in deliberating on these divisive issues, people must rely only on “public reason.” This consists of principles that everyone, regardless of his conception of the good, will have cause to accept. By an odd coincidence, if public reason is used properly, we will arrive at exactly the same principles as those set forward in *TJ*. It is difficult not to wonder whether Rawls’s enterprise is merely an attempt to find arguments in support of the political opinions of professors of his social class.

An example will show how public reason works. If your religion forbids abortion, you cannot appeal to this fact in political discussions, since religious views do not form part of public reason. Later, Rawls modified this rigid view. His final position was that you could mention your private views as long as you also had an argument from public reason to support your stand. Rawls’s introduction to the 2005 paperback edition of *Political Liberalism* states, “Certainly Catholics may, in line with public reason, continue to argue against the right of abortion. That the Church’s nonpublic reason requires its members to follow its doctrine is perfectly consistent with their following public reason.”

Even with that concession, Rawls’s idea of public reason has little to recommend it. Rawls has simply defined a notion of social stability to suit his theory. He never shows that something bad will happen if a society is not “stable” in his sense. Why cannot a society like our own, with considerable religious and philosophical disagreement, continue to flourish without the crutch of public reason? Unless one defines a

society so that it must include common adherence to a political doctrine, it is not clear why social order demands agreement. Would not coercive efforts to enforce such a political orthodoxy on people with strong religious beliefs be likely to reduce social stability rather than promote it? This is the clear lesson of modern French history, from the Jacobins to the religious conflicts of the French Third Republic.

Rawls’s star is now in the ascendant, but philosophical fashions often change. In the 1920s, Ralph Barton Perry’s *General Theory of Value* created a sensation, but it is now largely forgotten. Will *A Theory of Justice* suffer a similar fate? Most philosophers today would say no, but I wouldn’t bet on it, despite the efforts of the Rawlsians. They have attracted considerable attention in libertarian circles in the past year, but so far they have not produced any substantial body of work. I suspect that this movement is little more than an attempt to gain libertarian mileage out of a popular political philosophy.

Ironically, the Rawlsian movement serves to illustrate the inherent vagueness of the difference principle, which can be taken either to allow or forbid massive inequalities. Unless some future Rawlsian can show that the system has definite practical implications, and, even more important, can reply to the objections that Nozick raised, Rawls seems destined to fall from his current heights of esteem. During the late 19th century, Herbert Spencer was regarded as one of the greatest philosophers, but in the 20th century Talcott Parsons could ask, “Who now reads Herbert Spencer?” Perhaps one day a similar question will be asked about John Rawls. ■

*David Gordon is a Senior Fellow of the Ludwig von Mises Institute and editor of The Mises Review.*

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## Afghanistan

*Continued from page 9*

working with regional powers to secure the limited but actual U.S. interests in Afghanistan and the rest of South and Central Asia—weakening the influence of radical Islam; damaging the infrastructure of terrorist groups; preventing unstable regimes and terrorist organizations from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction.

In that context, Washington should no longer depend on Pakistan—an unreliable client state and unstable regime with ties to radical Islamic groups—to serve as its strategic ally in the region. Instead, the U.S. should provide incentives to India, which is emerging as a leading economic and military partner, to counterbalance the power of Pakistan as part of an effort backed by Russia and Turkey to reduce the influence of radical Islam in Afghanistan and the rest of the region. Some remnants of the Taliban are expected to return to Afghanistan, but they should know that if they provide refuge to anti-American terrorists again, they face another rendezvous with those Daisy Cutters. At the same time, the U.S. should make the capture of Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda terrorists hiding in Pakistan a condition for any improvement in America’s relationship with Islamabad.

This set of policies may not sound as romantic as nation-building. But a U.S. president who has the gift of a first-rate intelligence and who claims not to be using the methods of Doublethink will suffer no dissonance if he decides to pursue them. ■

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*Leon Hadar is a Cato Institute research fellow in foreign-policy studies and author, most recently, of Sandstorm: Policy Failure in the Middle East.*



# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[Elegy]

### The Gropes of Roth

By Steve Sailer

PARADOXICALLY BUT PROFITABLY, Hollywood assumed that America's youth wanted to spend May and June, the two months of the year with the nicest weather, inside watching blockbuster movies. Now that the dog days of summer are here, the big movies are trickling to a halt, and art house films for adults are back.

You can't get much art housier than "Elegy," in which Sir Ben Kingsley portrays one of novelist Philip Roth's lesser alter egos, the lecherous literature professor David Kepesh.

F. Scott Fitzgerald famously asserted, "There are no second acts in American lives." This is often true for alcoholics, particularly the many American writers who resorted to the bottle to restore temporarily the visual world's luminous glow, that green light at the end of the dock that shone for them when they were young and in their lyrical primes.

In contrast, a social novelist such as Roth can potentially keep getting better as he becomes older and wiser. Roth hit the bestseller lists in 1969 with *Portnoy's Complaint*, the definitive denunciation of "Jewish guilt," which in Roth's book is the opposite of "white guilt"—it's the nagging sense that you aren't ethnocentric enough. After that early success,

Roth's career bogged down in experimental conceits.

Over the last decade and a half, from about the age of 60 onward, he's returned with a torrent of strong novels, allowing his fans to proclaim him America's greatest living writer. Perhaps, but there's little mystery to Roth's talent. You can imagine that if you were twice as smart and ten times as hard-working, you too could do what Roth does.

Filmmakers haven't had much success adapting his recent work. His 2000 novel *The Human Stain* offered an inherently interesting story inspired by the life of literary critic Anatole Broyard, an important advocate of Roth's early work, who had more or less passed from black to white. The ambitious film version's 1940s flashback scenes, with Wentworth Miller of "Prison Break" as the student ruthlessly shedding his black family, were moving. Unsurprisingly, however, Sir Anthony Hopkins, Hollywood's laziest actor, proved hopeless at seeming part-black.

"Elegy" is adapted from Roth's lesser 2001 book, *The Dying Animal*. The 62-year-old Professor Kepesh, who moonlights as an arts maven on New York's PBS channel, methodically seduces one of his students each semester: "They are helplessly drawn to celebrity, however inconsiderable mine may be." In long digressions, Kepesh—like Roth a child of the 1930s—salutes the 1960s sexual revolution when he shed his wife and small son for attachment-free affairs with co-eds. The divorce rate exploded in 1968, in part because the baby boom that had started in 1946 meant there was suddenly a huge crop of 18 to 22-year-old women competing for the attention of the small number of successful—and thus generally married—older men.

His life is perfect, Kepesh believes, except for being constantly upbraided about his marital irresponsibility by his resentful son—a striking supporting performance from the protean Peter Sarsgaard, who apparently looks too much like an old-fashioned leading man to get the big roles in today's movies that his talent deserves.

Then Kepesh has the misfortune to land a bland but beautiful 24-year-old (Penelope Cruz). To his horror, he finds that he can't forget her like all the others because she has such perfect breasts. It's refreshing, after all those Angelina Jolie movies, to see a film that admits that in real life a lovely woman does not have to be, say, a world-class assassin. She just has to be gorgeous, which the 34-year-old Cruz certainly is. On the other hand, her role is intentionally dull.

A tale of an aged lothario's comeuppance should always be good for a farcical laugh. Yet Roth, who has exhaustively worked every conceivable variation on his not exceptionally interesting life story, chose instead to make Kepesh whiny and maudlin.

Roth, always a high bandwidth writer, is at least interesting in *The Dying Animal*. "Elegy," though, is slow and self-pitying. The dialogue is sparse and uninspired, and there are no flashbacks to the Swinging Sixties to enliven matters. The filmmakers assume that the unappealing Kepesh's story is the stuff of high tragedy. They don't grasp that Kepesh is the antihero of his book. The bad guy famously gets all the good lines in *Paradise Lost*, but not in "Elegy," leaving Kingsley to mope about ponderously in the rain. ■

Rated R for sexuality, nudity, and language.

## BOOKS

[*Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century*, Tony Judt, Penguin Press, 464 pages]

### Capital Offenses

By Peregrine Worsthorne

IN BRITAIN TODAY there are no quality newspapers aimed primarily at the educated reader, with the exception of the Left-leaning *Guardian*. All the others, the broadsheets as much as the tabloids, have gone downmarket, none more so than *The Times*, which in the old days advertised itself with the phrase “top people read *The Times*,” a claim that in these obsessively anti-elitist times would be quite ludicrously counter-productive. Out of nostalgia, I still take the *Telegraph*, for which I have written for over half a century, but I have found to my disgust that the paper has—to put it kindly—fallen into philistine hands. Of course, the *Guardian*’s left-wing views are not to my taste, but I prefer intellectually stimulating articles with which I disagree to populist rodomontade that makes me feel ashamed to be right-wing.

Nor, I regret to say, do Britain’s famous weekly journals of opinion fill the intellectual vacuum left by the dumbing down of the daily and Sunday papers. The conservative *Spectator* is particularly disappointing in this respect, giving the impression that it is now aimed primarily at multimillionaire hedge-funders looking for smart, celebrity-orientated weekend reading.

As for the politicians, they are little better than PR puppets. For all intents and purposes, intelligent political debate has come to an end. None of the parties any longer possesses clear vision of what a good, or even better, society might be except as measured in economic terms. Because the City of

London produces the moneybags on which British prosperity depends, the central bankers, transnational corporations, and international agencies really do call the tune more than ever. This state of affairs makes almost as much nonsense of conservatism, which believes in exerting the power of the state diplomatically and militarily, as it does of socialism, which believes in exerting the power of the state economically. An absolute belief in the market is the new reigning orthodoxy, from which no prudent politician can afford to deviate. In effect, Adam Smith’s “invisible hand,” instead of the state’s very visible hand, now pulls the real levers of power, which leaves the politicians with no awe-inspiring or heroic role to play. So it is no wonder that the great body of the best and brightest now go into finance, rather than politics, since it is there that the action now lies. Politicians have become a sideshow, essentially part of the entertainment business. No wonder the media does not take them seriously.

All this by way of explaining why this collection of essays by Tony Judt, the distinguished historian—who really does take politics seriously and sees it as one of the secular ways of helping individuals to transcend their egotistical preoccupations—is so important. Written between the years 1994 and 2006, and coming out for the most part in small-circulation literary journals like the *New York Review of Books*, *The London Review of Books*, and *The Times Literary Supplement*, this is the first time most readers will have had an opportunity to enjoy them.

His range is vast, covering most of the main issues and personalities of the 20th century—“Albert Camus: ‘The Best Man in France’”; “Hannah Arendt and Evil”; “Eric Hobsbawm and the Romance of Communism”; “The Silence of the Lambs: On the Strange Death of Liberal America”; “The Gnome in the Garden: Tony Blair and Britain’s Heritage”; “The Illusionist: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy”—to name only a few. In every case there is an original angle, an enlightening aperçu, and an

unusually deep understanding of the subject. All of these qualities are well-illustrated by the essay on the Cuban Missile Crisis, which he approaches, uniquely in my experience, as much from the Soviet as from the American point of view.

This is how he sets the scene:

By the time of the Cuban crisis the Soviet Union was at a seventeen-to-one disadvantage in intercontinental missiles. Khrushchev knew this, and he knew that the Americans knew it. ... The temptation to place medium range missiles (with which the Soviet Union was well supplied) just off the Florida coast seemed irresistible; after all the US had bases around the frontiers of the USSR. As Khrushchev complained to US ambassador Thompson in April 1961, ‘The USA ... believes that it has the right to put military bases along the borders of the USSR’—and a few Soviet missiles up against America’s borders would serve it right. ‘The Americans had surrounded our country with military bases, and threatened us with nuclear weapons, and now they would learn just what it feels like to have enemy missiles pointing at you.’

In other words, the surprise was not so much that the Soviet Union had sought to level the strategic playing field—which the United States in the previous years had tilted very much in its favor—as that it had not tried to do so before. The Soviet Union was the original wronged party, reacting belatedly to what in its view had been a sustained policy of American strategic aggression. President Kennedy himself realized this and defused the crisis with admirable restraint.

Yet this is not how it was presented to the journalists in Washington at the time. As it happened, I was one of them, staying throughout the crisis with my old friend Philip Geyerlin, the editor of the *Washington Post*. At the end of the fateful day on which Khrushchev

“blinked,” Kennedy’s senior aides, who had been incarcerated in the White House throughout the crisis, joined us for dinner. There was absolutely no recognition in the triumphalist conversation of American responsibility for provoking the Soviet action, no suggestion that perhaps in the future more effort should be made to see things through Soviet eyes.

Although, as I say, Kennedy did in his actions show an understanding of Soviet sensibilities, clearly to admit that there was right on both sides was regarded as politically too dangerous. So for public consumption the pretense had to be maintained that the Cold War was the Manichean struggle between God and Satan; a deadly exaggeration which had started under President Truman in the early 1950s and continued through the Reagan years. When the “evil empire” eventually crumbled, the American people saw this as little short of a Second Coming, giving the United States a divine mandate to reshape the world.

For Americans, victory in the Cold War was more than a terrestrial victory. It was also a celestial victory for which the U.S. had been prepared to risk destroying not only their own and the Russian peoples—who could be presumed to have given their consent—but the peoples of the rest of the world whose permission was never asked. Henceforth all things were going to be fundamentally transformed—in a word, reborn. As Judt puts it,

tory reaching its end, it might be about to repeat itself, albeit with a new and different grand revolutionary narrative.

Why not indeed? The gap between rich and poor is growing ever wider—to a scandalous degree. Nor do the rich seem to see anything untoward in this state of affairs. Very much like their predecessors who did well out of the First World War, the post-Cold War generation of the very rich are now living lives that are shallow, luxurious, and

WHEN WILL CONSERVATIVES REALIZE THAT **GLOBAL CAPITALISM**, COUPLED WITH **SECULARISM**, MIGHT PROVE A FAR GRAVER THREAT TO ALL THAT THEY HOLD DEAR THAN ANY HARM THAT EVER CAME FROM **SOCIALISM**?

...with too much confidence and too little reflection we put the 20th century behind us and strode boldly into its successor swaddled in self-serving half truths: triumph of the West, the end of history, the uni-polar American moment, the ineluctable march of globalization and the free market

vulgar-hearted, displaying a kind of grandiose insolence and self-indulgence. The merest suggestion of putting up their taxes is met by threats to take their business elsewhere. Not since the beginning of the 20th century has the arrogance and self-confidence of the rich been so brazen, so bereft of all the restraints of fear and prudence instilled in the 20th century by the Bolshevik Revolution.

In other words, as one evil empire fell, a utopian empire—equally dangerous—took its place.

The manifestation that particularly interests Judt is the deification of global capitalism, and it is to this particular spin off of the Cold War victory that he devotes the first and last of his essays—the only ones which have not been published before. Judt poses an all-important question at a time when recession looms. Just as we were wrong to put our faith in the “ineluctable” march of American forces into Iraq, may we not also be wrong, he asks, to put our faith in the ineluctable march of global capitalism across the world? For early 21st-century global capitalism is producing the very conditions of gross inequality and provocative conspicuous consumption combined with widespread insecurity that helped to discredit capitalism and give rise to communism early in the 20th century. In other words, so far from his-

During the recent boom years, this did not matter. But how will it play in these harder times? Judt worries about our complacency, our ignoring the degree to which the terrifying ups and downs—the ups being almost as disorientating as the downs—induced by global capitalism make life hell for all those who like to live in quiet and settled times, those conservative-minded people who love tradition and continuity. When will conservatives realize that global capitalism, coupled with secularism, might prove a far graver threat to all that they hold dear than any harm that ever came from socialism? Not for the very rich—who can buy their security—but for the merely well off, not to mention the poor, who are only now for the first time since the Cold War beginning to have doubts. How much insecurity—quite as integral a part of global capitalism as economic growth—is compatible with the good

## MOVING?

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life? If we reduce the power of the nation state, as demanded by global capitalism, will it not quite soon be too weak to protect the victims of global capitalism?

"What needs to be grasped," Judt says, "is that men and women in precarious employment, immigrants with partial civil rights, young people with no long term job prospects, the growing ranks of the homeless and the inadequately housed, are not some fringe problems to be addressed and resolved, but represent something grimly fundamental," which is bound to provoke grimly fundamental counter capitalist forces, not of course a resumption of communism but something equally challenging.

Over and over again, Judt comes back to this same concern. Unshackled market forces can do the devil's work as well as God's. Some of their fruit are miraculously beneficial; some diabolical, and only a strong nation state, served by politicians who believe in it, can maintain the right balance.

Essentially Judt's essays are a plea to the American neocons to open their minds:

Nothing is more ideological, after all, than the proposition that all affairs and policies, private and public, must turn upon the globalizing economy, its unavoidable laws, and its insatiable demands. Indeed, this worship of economic necessity and its iron laws was also a core promise of Marxism. In transiting from the 20th century to the 21st, have we not just abandoned one 19th century belief system and substituted another in its place?

So history has not come to an end. We may be about to pay a high price for having so presumptuously supposed otherwise. ■

*Peregrine Worsthorne is a former editor of The Sunday Telegraph and a long-standing contributor to Encounter, Foreign Affairs, the New York Times, London Times, Washington Post, Spectator, and New Statesman among many others.*

[*An American Family: The Buckleys*, Reid Buckley, Threshold Editions, 459 pages]

## Conservatism's First Family

By Daniel McCarthy

THE BUCKLEYS are best known for Bill—William F. Buckley Jr., founder of *National Review*, author of 56 books, and one-time quixotic New York City mayoral candidate. But there is more to this family beyond its most famous son. He was sixth of a brood of ten: preceding him were Aloïse, author of short stories and considered "maybe the most talented literarily" by her siblings; John, the firstborn son who followed his father into the oil business; Priscilla, a journalist for the United Press and long-time managing editor of *National Review*; James, who became a United States senator and recently published a memoir, *Gleanings From an Unplanned Life*; and Jane, the rebellious one who refused to write, save for one article on quitting smoking. After Bill came Patricia, collaborator with her husband L. Brent Bozell in the Catholic magazine *Triumph*; Reid, founder of the Buckley School of Public Speaking and writer of novels as well as this family history; Maureen, who imposed order on *NR*'s subscriptions department; and Carol, the youngest by five years—20 years younger than Aloïse—and author of the memoir *At the Still Point*. Between them they produced some 50 grandchildren for William F. Buckley Sr. and his wife Aloïse Steiner Buckley.

These children and their achievements testify to the character of Will and Aloïse. The parents were not writers, so the task falls to Reid—borrowing here and there from works by his siblings—to tell the story of the patriarch who established conservatism's first family and the wife and mother whose faith sustained them all. "Mother's and Father's imprint on their children,"

writes Reid, "... reveal their personalities more comprehensively than is possible in straightforward biography, which (a straightforward anything) I am incapable of writing." The clan's credo is summed up in a phrase Reid cites on several occasions: "that 'God, family, and country,' *in that order*, demanded our unswerving loyalty..."

Will Buckley was born in 1881, in the small Texas town of Washington de los Brazos. His father, John Buckley, was a sheriff and close acquaintance of Pat Garrett. Will became a lawman of a different sort: after studying law at "the university"—the University of Texas at Austin—he struck out for Mexico to seek his fortune, first as an attorney, then as an oilman. He prospered, though the country was in the midst of a long, tortuous revolution. Mexico was the last frontier of the Wild West, with enough bandits, ruthless businessmen, and political tumult to populate a dozen Sergio Leone films. And Will was in the thick of things. While entrusted "to deliver the payroll of a big U.S. company" by train, Will encountered the bandit-revolutionary Pancho Villa, who threatened to shoot the conductor unless the hapless railway official turned over the gold. Will came forward to say that he, not the conductor, had hidden the money. Villa admired courage and was sufficiently impressed with Will to let them live. He invited *Ojos Azules*—blue-eyed "Guillermo" Buckley—to come see him some time.

Will did just that. In December 1914, as Villa and Emiliano Zapata celebrated the fall of Mexico City with a banquet for their troops, Will burst into the celebration, furious. "I have no idea what incident had occurred," Reid reports, "but Father was mad, truly angry, and, I surmise, to a self-imperiling degree, out of control." What did Will Buckley want? "You can keep your men off of my property," he told Villa, "Because the next time one of your men puts his foot on my property, he will be shot." With all the revolutionary firepower in the room, Will was more likely to be gunned down himself. But once again, Villa saluted his courage and granted his wish.



Pancho Villa was not the only Mexican with abiding respect for Will Buckley. The American had a reputation for fairness and incorruptibility, so much so that after he refused to take part in Woodrow Wilson's occupation of Veracruz—the U.S. president had offered to make Will the city's civil governor—Mexican leader Victoriano Huerta appointed him counsel for Mexico's delegation at the ensuing peace conference. Five years later, in 1919, Will testified before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Mexican Affairs, "delivering a scathing denunciation of Wilsonian interference in the business of other nations, of Wilsonian ignorance, provincialism, and bias, and self-righteousness." As Reid relates, Will told the senators that the U.S. diplomat who convinced Wilson to send Marines to Veracruz was "typical of the provincial American, who in need of civilization himself, seeks to civilize the rest of the world."

Will was a staunch noninterventionist. "Father most likely would have opposed both the Afghanistan and Iraq adventures unless he was convinced that they were necessary for national defense," Reid believes. "Our sire would have been inclined to this attitude from Washington's Farewell Address, too, but it was in Mexico that he was confirmed in his isolationism." The senior Buckley thought, in his son's words, that "Americans tend to be well-meaning democratic ideologues who wish to impose their principles of self-government on nations whose societies either are not ready for self-government or are outright hostile to it." Reid sympathizes with his father's philosophy up to a point: "Just as Americans should have been suspicious of, and should have opposed, the utopianism of Woodrow Wilson, so should Americans be wary and skeptical of the goodhearted Christian simplicity of George Bush II, who is as provincial as Wilson before him."

But Reid does not fully agree with his father. The son says of his generation, "Pearl Harbor and the Soviet Union made us interventionists," and Reid disagrees with his brother Bill's 2006 characterization of the Iraq War as a "failed enterprise." Even so, an echo of Will's nonin-

terventionism and antistatism resounds when Reid refers to "our gruesome war in Vietnam" and writes, "though ... we may not be able to resist or avoid government encroachment on the private sphere in all respects, especially concerning national security, we must never *not* resent it, and we must remember to despise it." Will went further, forthrightly opposing U.S. militarism. "He acted always according to his principles," says his son, "which were deeply American, deeply independent, isolationist, self-reliant, distrustful of all government, and profoundly Catholic."

An American living in Mexico cannot properly be called an isolationist, of course, and as an individual, Buckley *père* lent support to one of Mexico's political factions—the Cristeros, who opposed the murderous anticlericalist elements of the revolution. For this, Will Buckley was declared *persona non grata* in 1921 and forced to leave the country at once. He lost nearly everything—his property, his oil concessions, but thankfully not his young and growing family.

Will had married Aloise Steiner of New Orleans, a devout Catholic of Swiss descent, in 1917. The family lived in London and Paris for a few years, while Will sought financing for new ventures, before settling in Sharon, Connecticut, where they purchased a "huge pre-Revolutionary farmhouse called Great Elm." These were comparatively lean years for the Buckleys. Will bought such an impressive home because he knew that it would reassure investors, or at least create the impression that he was a man of independent means. But money was tight, and Will had yet to find oil in new concessions in Venezuela when the Great Depression struck. His prospecting had been so unfruitful that on Wall Street he earned the nickname "Dry Hole Buckley."

The children loved Great Elm, with its rolling lawns on which they could lie and daydream endlessly. But Aloise Steiner Buckley was lonely. Her husband worked in New York City throughout the week, and as a Southerner and a Catholic she was doubly a stranger in WASP New England. She entertained marvelously at

Great Elm, but to the town bluenoses there was something suspect about the Buckley family, with its "excessive ... number of rambunctious children," its "exotic houseguests ranging from Mexican statesmen to revolutionary ex-governors resembling the Hollywood stereotype of Pancho Villa bandits with their brown skins and thick black mustachios," and "Will Buckley's shocking contempt for Wall Street, for Wilson, for Roosevelt ... and for all those other respectable totems of those days..."

Rescue for Aloise came in the form of a summer home called Kamschatka in Camden, South Carolina. The Buckleys bought the house after Will struck oil again, at long last, in 1939. Camden was and is, according to Reid, a place of archetypal Southern charm: "among its important characteristics are reverence for tradition, a prickly sense of honor, pride of family, disdain for riches, and a tolerance for—a glorying in—eccentricity. This must have particularly attracted my father, as it did me." Catholics may not have been plentiful, but the religious and social climate was welcoming. "The people of Camden were churchgoing," Reid recalls, "but their attitude toward religion might be described as an easy familiarity in contrast to the strict censoriousness of New England." For Aloise, Camden was "the end of exile and a coming home." For the children, however, "Camden was awful." Lying on the grass there was an invitation to be "bitten by ants, pricked by cactus, lanced by scorpions, stung by spiders, infested by fleas, or hooked by those incredibly sharp sandspurs that were everywhere." But in time the Buckley sons and daughters came to love Kamschatka.

The vignettes of life at Great Elm and Kamschatka that occupy the latter half of *An American Family* are no less delightful, if inevitably less dramatic, than the tales of Will Buckley's adventures in Mexico. The final third of the book strikes a bittersweet chord, juxtaposing these happy days and the maturation of the Buckley children with the aging and death of their parents. Will Buckley died in 1958, aged 77. Aloise, 14 years younger

than her husband, survived him by 27 years, outliving two of her daughters: “she endured with unshakable faith the terrible blows of the deaths of Maureen, at age thirty-one ... and then five years later of Allie, at age forty-eight, her first-born child.” Son John also died a year before her. Buoying Aloïse’s spirits in these late years was her sister Inez, not just kin but a kindred spirit. Reid relates a charming story of the time he unthinkingly invited the two of them to lunch with a dangerous man—Norman Mailer. But the literary bad boy was a model of courtliness with Mrs. Buckley and her sister, even escorting them home from the restaurant where they had met. Afterwards, a disarmed Mailer exclaimed to Reid, “You conservatives always have a f-----g ace in the hole, don’t you!” Reid regarded Mailer fondly ever after.

These are twilight years for the children of Will and Aloïse, and a tone of elegy overtakes *An American Family* in its last pages. In the past two years, death has taken Bill, Patricia, and Jane Buckley, and James’s wife Ann was paralyzed in an automobile accident. Reid not only laments the toll mortality has taken on his family but the inexorable decline of the principles for which the family fought. He refers to “the conservative (now lost) cause” and writes, “Our parents were the product of a nation that has vanished, and we, their children, have manned the ramparts in defense of that ghost. From this standpoint, our existences have been futile, our works folly.”

Offsetting the gloom somewhat are Reid’s closing lines: “We loved and did our best to honor our parents. We love one another. Our children are a joy to us. And for the rest, we trust in Christ and Christ’s promises. How lucky we have been!” *An American Family* gives proof of that enduring bond. It also supplies greater cause for hope than Reid might realize. Will Buckley’s America may be no more, but his character sets an example every bit as compelling today as when he lived. Should even a few Americans take the ethos of Will Buckley to heart after reading this book, the old Republic may yet have a chance. ■

[*The Bin Ladens: An Arabian Family in the American Century*, Steve Coll, Penguin, 672 pages]

## Jetset Jihadis

By Ed West

I WAS DROWNING my nerves in an airport lounge a few years back when the public address system paged a “Mr. Jihad” to make his way to my flight. Oh God, I thought, please tell me he’s bought a round-trip ticket.

Many of us get a bit jittery about Middle Eastern passengers, so one can only imagine how the crew on board a chartered airliner felt back on Sept. 13, 2001, when they asked the man organizing the flight for the passenger roster only to be given a list with two dozen people all called bin Laden.

“The guy turned white, absolutely ghost white,” recalled Jason Blum, the police officer in charge of spiriting the bin Laden clan out of the United States. The other passengers felt little better. Perhaps it is hard to pity Osama’s sister Najiah for having to use cash while shopping because of raised eyebrows about her name. A little more sympathy, though, is due to her American-raised nephew Salman, who had just obtained his first fake ID—obviously of limited use in his new home in Saudi Arabia.

Airplanes and the black gold that powers them are themes running through Steve Coll’s biography of the bin Laden clan. The fortunes of Saudi Arabia and of its most famous *nouveau riche* family have been closely connected with flying.

In 1902, the year before the Wright brothers made the first powered flight at Kitty Hawk, Abdulaziz ibn Saud rode out of the desert with a few followers and their camels to reclaim Riyadh, a city that his family had ruled on and off for 200 years. Ibn Saud lived by a peculiarly Arabian form of machismo, loving “women, scent and prayer.” Wahhabism, the puritanical strain of Islam that the Saudis had followed for two centuries, did not much go in for wine or song.

Saud’s new kingdom was a barren feudal state, yet the people were as snobbish about bloodlines as any Euro-trash aristocracy. They viewed the Hadhrami immigrants, from what is now Yemen, as vulgar though enterprising parvenus. Their attitude, Coll explains, was similar to “that which a 1950s-era WASP bank executive in New England might hold toward a dark-skinned, grade-school-educated entrepreneurial Sicilian who built his lakeside summer cottage—charming fellow, but keep him away from the girls.”

One such fellow was Mohammed bin Laden (1908-67), an illiterate, one-eyed mathematical genius who rose from dockside navvy to mogul through a mixture of hard work and relentless accommodation with the whims of the royal family, which included letting the wilder Saudis borrow his airplanes. Saudi Arabia was a country built on petrodollars and petro-capitalism. Bin Laden also had something that no CEO would sniff at—charm.

He certainly had no trouble with the ladies, often marrying in the morning and divorcing in the afternoon. Wives were taken, impregnated, then passed on to underlings to marry. The bin Laden family tree must look like an Einstein equation.

Mohammed bin Laden’s tenth wife, Hamida al-Attas, was a Syrian Alawite, an *à la carte* form of Islam viewed with murderous disfavor by fundamentalists. She bore bin Laden a boy, Osama, who could have been anywhere between son number 19 and 23, March 1957 being an especially prolific month for Mr. B.L.

By 1961, Mohammed bin Laden had become a controversial figure on account of his ability to win royal contracts, notably those for the rebuilding of Mecca, which included the creation of the world’s largest air-conditioning system. Religiously, he seems to have been no more devout than was necessary; at all events, he employed and befriended Christians. His passion was reserved for women and airplanes, both of which he preferred in large numbers.

It was a measure of how close Mohammed bin Laden had become to the Saudis that, even when the government was rounding up Yemenis after a terrorist campaign in 1966, King Faisal entrusted him with the construction of defenses to protect his country.

By the standards of 20th-cum-7th-century Arabia, the king was a liberal, abolishing slavery and introducing television. One of the first programs to be broadcast showed the forced confessions of tortured Yemenis.

King Faisal also gave out copies of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as gifts to visitors, and he once told Richard Nixon that Zionists were behind even Palestinian terrorism as part of some devious plan.

It was television, though, that did him in. Faisal bin Musaid, a failed political-science graduate who had been thrown out of Colorado and Berkeley for selling LSD, swore revenge after his brother was shot dead by police in 1965 during a protest against the kingdom's television studio. Ten years later, in a scene straight from "Austin Powers," bin Musaid sneaked into the royal presence behind the vast girth of the Kuwaiti oil minister and killed King Faisal with a .38-caliber pistol. The assassin's beheading was not televised—his brother would have been pleased to know—though the execution nevertheless commanded an audience of 20,000.

Mohammed bin Laden was also now dead, killed in September 1967, when his American pilot, Jim Harrington, crashed their Twin Beech in a crosswind. The tycoon's body was identifiable only by his shiny watch.

The Saud-bin Laden relationship continued to flourish, however, through the friendship of King Fahd and Mohammed's son Salem bin Laden, a millionaire court jester who once took pictures of his backside after hemorrhoid surgery and presented a slideshow at a party hosted by Crown Prince Saud.

On another occasion, Salem bin Laden left Robert Freeman, an American investment banker, and an Italian associate stranded in the middle of the desert as a joke. They had to hitchhike

back to Jeddah, where they found Salem giddy with laughter. A year later, in New York, Freeman drove a walletless Salem to Harlem, forced him out of his car, and sped away. Shortly afterward, Salem walked into a hotel with two new African-American friends.

Salem shared his father's twin passions. He loved aviation, although the king banned him from flying in Saudi for his own safety. And he collected girlfriends, at one point proposing to four Western mistresses at the same time. The bait was that he would build a new compound in Jeddah with separate houses, each of which would fly the flag of its resident's nation. He also promised them all cars from their own countries. The Englishwoman alone took up the offer, plumping for a Rolls-Royce rather than a Rover.

Back on planet Earth, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. By this stage Osama, now 22, was already fairly fanatical. He had grown up with his mother and stepfather and had not received the international education of the others. At 12, he visited London to have his eyes treated; otherwise there is no evidence that he explored the West. The famous family picture from the 1970s of the clan in Sweden dressed in flares does not in fact include Osama.

Osama's adventures in central Asia were not as heroic as he later claimed. His Arab fighters played a minimal part in the war against the Soviets, and Afghans felt contempt for the rich Saudis who came over to fire guns in the air while expressing their wish to become martyrs. In fact, they were often brought home by their parents. By the time the Soviets withdrew, the Arab Afghans had become a slightly sham-bolic bunch.

In 1988, Salem shared his father's fate, crashing his light aircraft in Texas. A business partner recalled that Salem had told him, "This brother of mine in Afghanistan is going to be our family's big problem."

After the Saudis had turned down Osama's offer to raise a rag-tag force to defend the country against Iraq's two-

million-strong army, the radical sheikh sulked off to Sudan, where initially he spent his time sending angry faxes and writing poetry of the teenage angst sort. ("Death is truth and ultimate destiny, and life will end anyway. If I do not fight you, then my mother must be insane.")

Despite his notoriety, one gets the impression that Osama, with his limp handshake—"like a fish"—was not entirely revered. The tougher jihadis, veterans of Egypt's torture archipelago, leached off his money and fame, and he was repeatedly ripped off in Sudan. One follower swindled him out of \$110,000 in a series of manipulated commodity deals.

Osama could have been a kind of *jihad* Kennedy, save that his money went to Sudanese land schemes rather than convertibles and girls. Although his wealth was not nearly as large as has been rumored, he did blow his \$15 million inheritance in four or five years.

All of which gives a fresh perspective on a man we fear and hate. This book is not an account of the dark heart of Saudi Arabia, of sinister oil profiteering—Bush hardly gets a mention—or of the rise of fundamentalism. Coll offers a straight dynastic biography that succeeds in telling the story of a rather strange family with honesty, fairness, and an eye for anecdote.

The characters are all brought to life—Mohammed, Salem, the perfumer Yeslam who tastelessly tried to make "bin Laden" brand jeans after 9/11, and the Americanized Abdullah, who approached a PR firm in New York after the attacks with the strange question "Do you know any Jewish lawyers?" The dullest member, oddly enough, is Osama.

On the whole, the bin Ladens seem to be a sympathetic bunch—charming fellows, mostly. One has to come to the same conclusion as the FBI: there are millions of bin Ladens running around, and "99.999999% of them are of the non-evil variety." ■

*Ed West is a journalist living in London. He has written for the Daily Telegraph, the London Times, Nuts, and The Catholic Herald.*

# Modem Operandi

I wonder whether a sort of totalitarianism, or something readily convertible to it, isn't the natural end point of advanced nations. Technology may make it inevitable.

A popular illusion is that we use technology to serve our ends. In fact, we seem to follow it to ends inherent in the technology. It has a will of its own.

For example, the automobile once invented made a dense network of roads inevitable, which made suburbs inevitable, which made malls inevitable, which made community and localism impossible and utterly changed the nature of society. This wasn't planned. Neither was the Internet, which grew as it chose while we watched in astonishment.

Today we hear much fuming about electronic surveillance and whether we should allow it. A better question might be whether we can *not* allow it. It is too easy, too convenient to be avoided.

The technical capacity exists for detailed watchfulness that Stalin would have envied. For practical purposes, the power of computers is now without limit. You can buy a commodity computer with a terabyte of storage. Global networking is a reality, the Web being the obvious example. Databases of virtually unlimited size can be searched almost instantly from around the globe. Google indexes billions of pages. How long after you hit the Enter key does it take for search results to appear?

This is new—not that governments will spy, but that they can do so easily, massively, and undetected. In 1950, police agencies could clandestinely open mail or tap phones, but it took time and manpower. Today enormous volumes of e-mail can be read automatically and copies sent to whoever wants

them. The intended recipient has no way of detecting the interception. You can use encryption, yes. But unless you have the source code for your encryption program, and know enough cryptology and programming to read it, you can't tell whether it has been backdoored.

An insidious quality of modern surveillance is its inconspicuousness. If jackbooted storm troopers kicked your door in and rifled through your papers, you might object. This seldom happens. Yet every use of your passport, every phone call, every purchase you make with a credit card or check, where and when and what, goes into a database. Cameras can (and in some places do) read the license numbers of all passing cars. This is not the place to go into the details of radio-frequency identification devices and cellphone tracking, but both exist.

My point here is not that any particular government is intentionally using the technology to impose totalitarian control. Some are (China, for example) and some aren't. My question is whether, as every move we make becomes watchable and trackable, any government will be able to resist the temptation.

Local governments are not immune to the attractions of intrusion. I recently read that in York, England, the wearing of hats in pubs is illegal because it interferes with the surveillance cameras. These are supposed to spot "troublemakers." Thus quickly does the pretext go from the exalted cause of opposing terrorism to catching guys with a snootful. What can be done will be.

All of which raises a couple of questions. First, is freedom possible without privacy? Those in law enforcement will argue that surveillance doesn't matter. If you do nothing illegal, their reasoning runs, what difference does it make what the government knows? A lot. For anyone who might butt heads with a government, whether in Beijing or Washington, being watched is intimidating. We all do things that can be used against us. A compromising e-mail about a tryst, sent to someone not a spouse, is embarrassing.

The second question is whether people really care about freedom. I think not, though we tell ourselves that we do. The majority care about prosperity and comfort—a nice house, tolerable job, consumerism's trinkets, beer, sex, 500 channels on the cable, and a couple of weeks a year at Disneyland. They go to Joe's Rib Pit, congregate with friends, swill Bud, and watch NASCAR. This is not contemptible. (I hope not: I do it.) It is enough freedom for most.

The abolition by disregard of the Constitution? An abstraction that doesn't register. I'll guess that 95 percent of the population have never heard of habeas corpus and don't know what the Fourth Amendment is. Freedom of speech matters only to intellectuals. The cameras are everywhere, but you hardly notice them. Anyway, Kyle Busch is eating up NASCAR in that Toyota. *Toyota*—ain't that something? In Georgia.

The comfortable do not revolt against what does not inconvenience them. Can the police always tell where your cellphone is? Know what books you have checked out? What websites you visit? Read your e-mail? Why, we hardly notice. Anyway, it is only to catch terrorists. ■



It was the foundation of our democracy.  
What happens now that it's gone?

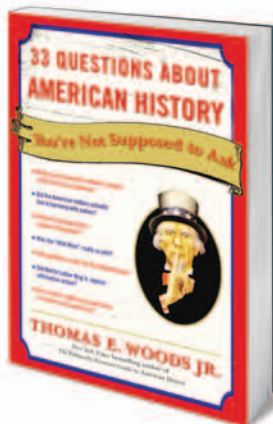
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